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LANGUAGE IN ORTHODOX MUSLIM THOUGHT: A
STUDY OF "WAD' AL-LUGHAH" AND ITS DEVELOP-
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LANGUAGE IN ORTHODOX MUSLIM THOUGHT:
A STUDY OF "WAD' AL-LUGHAH" AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

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Preface

Some of the materials used in the preparation of this dissertation were acquired from Egyptian libraries through the microfilming facilities of the Department of Manuscripts of the Arab League in Cairo. It was my good fortune to spend the winter of 1964-65 in Cairo under a research grant from the American Research Center in Egypt, during which time the acquisition of these materials was possible.

I have deliberately made it a practice not to include in the footnotes bibliographical data other than the author's name and the title. The reader may consult the "List of Works Consulted" for further data. Some Arabic titles are abbreviated, but in such a way that the work may be easily located in the "List of Works Consulted". The use of ibid., and op. cit. is restricted to instances where the previously cited work is on the same page.

I owe special thanks to Dr. Rudolph Mach and Prof. Farhat Ziadeh for calling my attention to numerous useful works, and to Prof. Ziadeh for reading the entire draft of the dissertation and suggesting numerous improvements. Any shortcomings that may mar the following pages are all of my own making.

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Introduction

The phrase waq' al-lughah gives expression to one of the most fundamental of all Islamic ideas, namely that of the givenness of language. This phrase did not gain currency until the tenth century, but the idea of the givenness of language was implicit in Islam from earliest times. Islam is a way of life centered upon sacred law. The law, which is the supreme given upon which the well-being of man depends utterly, is embodied in texts written in a particular language, i.e. Arabic. Since this language is independent of and prior to the law, it constitutes a given in its own right. Before the law can be known, the language of the sacred texts must be known. The chief service of the early philologists was to record the "givens of language" (al-mawdū'āt al-lughawiyah).¹ Lexicography was called the science of "the language" (ilm al-lughah), the definite article signifying an honorific title appropriate only to a well defined corpus such as was Arabic, a composite of givens to which nothing should be added and from which nothing should be taken away.

¹For the use of mawdū' in the sense of "given," see Gardet-Anawati, Introduction à la Théologie Musulmane, p. 407.

The term wad' itself is essentially a semantic term, and accordingly the idea of the givenness of language is worked out along semantic lines. What is given, what is established, with respect to language, is the relation between expressions (alfāz) and meanings (ma'ānī). This relation is the essence of language. Language comes into being when expressions and meanings are brought together. Separate them from each other, and you are left with mere sounds on the one hand and pure thought on the other. Language is the totality of its expressions together with the totality of their meanings. This of course presupposes a realm of distinct, self-contained, pre-existent meanings, to which expressions can be correlated in a one-to-one fashion. Both expressions, as sounds, and meanings, as pure ideas, precede language. Expressions are denizens of the external physical world (al-khāriq), ideas are denizens of the internal intelligible world (al-dhihn): language bridges the gap between the two worlds.

Thus the idea of the givenness of language is elaborated in terms of a radically inflexible doctrine of semantic fixity. Expressions are "established" for their meanings, and what is established cannot be changed. This guarantees that the expressions of the sacred texts have a fixed and constant

meaning which is never lost to the community of Muslims, since these meanings are rooted in the given.

One might say that the givenness of language is implicit in any religion based on revealed truths, whether these truths fall under the heading of law or not. Any scriptural revelation presupposes language, and the language chosen as the medium of revelation is necessarily a point of reference in the interpretation of the texts in which the revelation is contained. In Islam, however, the givenness of language has a unique importance. Whereas in Christianity the church or the Holy Spirit, illuminating the mind of the believer, exercises an interpreting role, in Islam this role devolves exclusively upon those versed in principles of interpretation based upon the study of language. The Prophet was considered to be an infallible interpreter of the Koran, but his interpretative statements are enshrined in traditions which themselves became part of the sacred texts. Moreover, in Christianity the Bible does not serve as a basis for law to the same extent that the sacred texts of Islam do. Canon law, it is true, was founded upon Scripture, but canon law did not aspire to the comprehensiveness that characterizes the law of Islam. Consequently, the Bible was never utilized for legal purposes as fully as the Koran and Sunnah were.

The Bible is primarily a book of history, which records the history of God's dealings with men. The communication of historical information does not place as great a burden upon language as the communication of legal directives. This is one reason why the Bible is accepted in translation, while the Koran is not. In Islam a vast legal system, in which practically every action of which man is capable is accorded a legal status, is founded upon the precise meanings of Arabic expressions; it is unthinkable that these expressions should be translated into another language.

On the other hand, one would not say that the givenness of language is implicit in all law, but only in sacred law. In the civil law of Europe, for example, the Latin of a particular period would never be considered an ultimate point of reference in the way that the Arabic of the Quraysh is so considered in Islam. The reason is that there are no absolutely final texts in civil law. Texts are always subject to revision and rephrasing at the hands of the powers that be. Ambiguities and archaisms may be eliminated, and the language of the texts brought up to date. Consequently, while older texts, for example the Twelve Tables, may be of utmost importance in the shaping of law, the language of an earlier period, e.g. fifth century B.C., is never regarded as a given for

the whole of law. In Islam, however, the sacred texts are not to be tampered with. The verbum dei is spoken once and for all. This means that if the verbum dei is to be understood and obeyed in all ages, the language in which it is expressed must be an absolute given. "Given" thus has the sense of "determined for all time." Archaisms are a part of the given. Moreover, in civil law texts tend to be precise in the first place; they are drawn up by legislative assemblies, or juristic councils, whose purpose is to state laws clearly, usually in a technical legal language. Therefore, even in the case of an older text meanings may be grasped with only a minimum of concern with matters of language. The sacred texts of Islam, especially the Koran, lack this initial precision. The Prophet did not consider himself primarily a lawgiver, though he did lay down norms for the community in Medinah. Consequently, the sacred law is based on texts that are not explicitly legal. This means that a great deal must be made of "oblique" meanings. The question of what can and what cannot be considered the proper meaning of a text is a question which must be resolved with reference to language.

There is a close affinity between the terms waq' and sunnah. The latter term, in its broad non-religious sense,

means simply "pre-established custom," i.e. that which has been laid down in the past as a norm for all subsequent activity. The sunnah is the totality of givens in the life of man. Restricting ourselves to this wider sense of the term, we may speak of a "sunnah of language"; indeed, one does come across instances here and there of the term used in this manner. Witness the title of Ibn Faris's book: al-ṣāhibī fī fīḥ al-lughah wa-sunan al-ʿarab fī kalāmihā ("Concerning the Understanding of Language and the Traditions of the Arabs with respect to their Speech"). For the most part, however, the term sunnah had a peculiarly religious significance; strictly speaking, it was a designation for the utterances and actions of the Prophet viewed as setting a true precedent for the new community, but in actual usage it became a designation for the body of traditions in which the actions and utterances of the Prophet were recorded. Because of this, the term waḍʿ, rather than sunnah, became the accepted term for the idea of precedent, of the given, in matters of language. However, far from being unrelated to each other, the terms waḍʿ and sunnah became mutually complementary. Knowledge of the sunnah, as well as of the Koran, depends on a knowledge of waḍʿ. In order to know what has been established in the moral and religious

life, one must know what has been established with reference to language.

This dissertation comprises three sections. The first is devoted to the controversy among Muslims over the origin of language. This controversy provides a background for an understanding of the early development of the idea of the givenness of language and the ultimate articulation of that idea by means of the phrase waq^c al-lughah. The second section deals with the further development of the idea within the science of the principles of jurisprudence (‘ilm usūl al-fiqh), where it is brought into sharper focus than in any of the other sciences. The crucial role of the term waq^c within the "linguistic premises" (al-mabādī’ al-lughawīyah) of that science is examined. The final section is concerned with the final crystallization of the idea of the givenness of language in the "science of waq^c" (‘ilm al-waq^c), a science which grew out of the "linguistic premises."

"wad' al-Lughah" and the Problem of the Origin of Language

The discussions of the origin of language (mabda' al-lughah)¹ form an important chapter in the development of the idea of the givenness of language in Islam. This givenness, as we have seen, means essentially the givenness of the expression-meaning relation; and the discussions of the origin of language were concerned primarily with this relation. The question of how language comes into being was understood as a question of how expressions come to be related to their meanings. At bottom there was a concern to show on what ground the givenness of the expression-meaning relation can be established.

There were three views in medieval Islam as to the origin of language. (1) According to one, language is the product of nature; that is, language originates in natural sounds which the human voice is able to imitate. Expressions therefore signify meanings by virtue of an intrinsic, natural resemblance to these meanings with respect to sound. (2) Ac-

¹This and ibtidā' are the common designations for the problem in the books of legal theory, e.g. al-Āmidī, al-Ib-kām, p. 38; Ibn al-Ḥājjib, Muntahā al-wuṣūl, p. 19.

According to the second view, language is the product of human convention, i.e. it originates in the concerted efforts of groups of human beings who gather together for the express purpose of appointing expressions for meanings. (3) The third view made language the result of divine instruction: the relation between expressions and meanings is rooted in the nature of God, in the divine articulateness; man learns both expressions and meanings from God.¹

The first two of these views bring to mind views of the origin of language advanced by the ancient Greeks; the so-called "physis" (nature) and "thesis" (convention) views. The question naturally arises whether we have here an instance of direct influence of Greek thought on Islam. That some influence occurred can hardly be denied. It is unlikely that a matter so widely discussed as the origin of language, a matter with which not only the pre-Socratics, Plato and Aristotle concerned themselves, but also Stoics and Epicureans²

¹The controversy over the origin of language in Islam has been dealt with by H. Loucel in "L'Origine du Langage d'après les grammairiens arabes," Arabica (1963-64). Loucel simply surveys and summarizes the relevant philological sources with a minimum of concern for historical setting and chronology. Beyond the philological works he does not go.

²W.S. Allen, "Ancient Ideas on the Origin and Development of language," Transactions of the Philological Society of London, 1948, pp. 35-60.

of later times, could have escaped entirely the notice of the Muslims. However, it would be wrong to think of the Muslim discussions of the origin of language as a mere continuation of the Greek discussions. Several considerations indicate that this was not the case.

(1) A continuation of the ancient discussions would have required a rather detailed knowledge of those discussions. But we do not know of any sources from which such a knowledge, in the period in which the Muslim discussions appear to have begun, i.e. the ninth century, could have been derived. The classical account of the thesis-physis controversy, i.e. Plato's Cratylus, was not, so far as we can tell, translated into Arabic. Al-Fārābī mentions it in his "Philosophy of Plato,"¹ but his account of it seems to be based on other sources, not on the Cratylus itself. The only known source from which the Muslims could have learned about the Greek theories is the De Interpretatione of Aristotle, in which a "conventionalist" position is put forward, together with its commentaries. But the works of Aristotle were not widely understood in the ninth century.

(2) The "naturalist" view of language and the "conven-

¹Alfarabius, De Platonis philosophia, Arabic text, p. 7.

tionalist" view were never simultaneously advanced in Islam as rival views: there was never a confrontation between them. It is true that in the later books in philology and legal theory (uṣūl al-fih) the two views are juxtaposed, together with the "theological" view;¹ but this must not be taken to mean that these views were propounded simultaneously at a given time. In actual fact, the "naturalist" view of language preceded the "conventionalist" view by at least half a century.² When the "conventionalist" view was first put forward, it appears that the "naturalist" view had been disposed of, so that no one then accepted it as a theory of the origin of language. All this shows rather conclusively that the debate of the ancient Greeks over the origin of language was not, in the sense of a debate between the competing and diametrically opposed "physis" and "thesis" views, continued in that form among the Muslims. Accordingly the mediating view of Socrates, which the Cratylus represents as bringing the debate over the origin of language to a conclusion,³ has no exact

¹e.g. al-Āmidī, al-Ihkām, p. 38.

²The basis for this chronology is given on p.

³According to Socrates, both convention and natural assimilation play a part in the formation of language; see Jowett, The Dialogues of Plato, pp. 222-224.

counterpart among the Muslims.

(3) The "naturalist" view, as advanced in Islam, can be accounted for without any recourse to a Greek precedent. It may very well have grown out of the speculation of philologists over the similarity between certain words and their meanings. According to Ibn Jinnī, one of the first to engage in this sort of speculation was Khalīl ibn Ahmad, ^(d. 791) the founder of Arabic philology. Khalīl, for example, is said to have held that the difference between the sounds of the grasshopper and the cricket is reflected in the words that signify those sounds: garra and gargara.¹ Such interest in onomatopoeia was carried to extreme by some etymologists, who attributed natural meanings to the consonants. Thus we find the difference in meaning between qaḍama and khaḍama made to rest on the difference in sound between q and kh. Qaḍama, because of the hardness of the q, means "to eat something hard and dry"; whereas khaḍama, owing to the lighter quality of the kh, means "to eat something soft and moist."² Such speculation as this could very easily have led to the supposition that language in its entirety originates in similarities

¹Ibn Jinnī, al-Khasa is, II, p. 152.

²ibid., pp. 157-158.

between vocal sounds and meanings.

Thus we look in vain for a mere repetition in Islam of the ancient physis-thesis controversy. Rather we find in the Muslim discussions of the origin of language two seemingly separate controversies: in the first, the "naturalist" and "theological" views are the contenders; in the second, the "conventionalist" and "theological" views. The "naturalist" and "conventionalist" views, rather than being opposites, represent successive challenges to a common opposite, namely the "theological" view.

The "naturalist-theological" controversy appears to have been a minor event in the intellectual history of early Islam. Unlike the later "conventionalist-theological" controversy, which involved representatives of major movements within Islam, this controversy seems to have been confined to Mu'tazilite circles. There is no record of a clash between the "naturalist" view and the emerging orthodoxy. Orthodoxy in the ninth century was represented by Ahmad ibn Hanbal (780-855) and his followers, who were concerned with issues of dogma; the origin of language was not at that time such an issue. The opposition to the "naturalist" view came from within Mu'tazilite ranks.

Our information concerning the "naturalist-theologi-

cal" controversy is unfortunately scanty. The only representative of the "naturalist" view whose name has come down to us is 'Abbād ibn Sulaymān (d. 864), a Mu'tazilite of Basra. As for the "theological" view, its earliest known representative among the Mu'tazilites is Abū 'Alī al-Jubbā'ī (d. 915-6),¹ who flourished a quarter of a century or more after the time of 'Abbād ibn Sulaymān. This leads us to wonder whether there was a controversy at all in 'Abbād's time, since we do not know of any of 'Abbād's contemporaries to have held the opposite, i.e. "theological", view. (The "conventionalist" view, according to Ibn Taymīyah, was not yet in existence.²) What is more likely is that an actual controversy did not occur until around the turn of the century, i.e. 900. If this is so, then the adversaries in the controversy would have been al-Jubbā'ī, representing the "theological" point of view, and certain followers of 'Abbād ibn Sulaymān, who continued to perpetuate the "naturalist" view of their master. This accords with what we know of a general conflict between al-Jubbā'ī and the followers of 'Abbād.³ 'Abbād had taken issue

¹Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, al-Tafsīr al-kabīr, II, p. 175.

²Ibn Taymīyah, Kitāb al-Imān, p. 36.

³W. Montgomery Watt, "Abbād ibn Sulaymān," EI (new ed.)

with the school of Abū al-Hudhayl (d. 840-1), the most celebrated of the early Mu'tazilites, in various points. Since al-Jubbā'ī belonged to this school, he took up the cudgels on its behalf against 'Abbād, whose views were then represented by the latter's followers. This suggests strongly that he adopted the "theological" view of the origin of language in direct opposition to the school of 'Abbād. Exactly how al-Jubbā'ī formulated the "theological" view is not known, but it is certain that his version of that view differed considerably from the traditionist version, which will be discussed presently. Probably his formulation was similar to that of the later speculative theologians (mutakallimūn) who held the "theological" view.¹

Unfortunately, as with all the early Mu'tazilites, we have no writings of 'Abbad ibn Sulaymān, and the usual sources for ninth century Mu'tazilitism, i.e. the Maqālāt of al-Ash'ari and the Kitāb al-Intisār of al-Khayyāt, have nothing to say about his view of language; nor do the volumes so far published of 'Abd al-Jabbār's al-Mughnī fī abwāb al-tawhīd wa-al-'adl shed any light. Consequently, we are reliant on the later books of legal theory (uṣūl al-fiqh). These

¹see p. 34

books, however, are more interested in the refutation of 'Abbād's view than in an objective statement of it and the arguments supporting it. The only argument of 'Abbād recorded is that given by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī in al-Maḥṣūl fī usūl al-fīḥ, where Abbād is said to have maintained that expressions must resemble their meanings, otherwise there would be no reason (tarīḥ) why one expression and not another is used for a particular meaning.¹ This argument is weak, and we may conjecture that 'Abbād had more effective arguments than that on which to build his case. On the other hand, if an actual controversy had not begun in his time, we may suppose that he rested his view more on philological considerations, e.g. onomatopoeia, than on theoretical considerations such as those upon which the above argument is based.

The standard arguments used to refute the "naturalist" view of the origin of language were as follows:

(1) If expressions of themselves (bi-dhātihā) signify meanings, i.e. by virtue of a similarity to the meaning, then necessarily each person would know all the languages; it would be unnecessary to learn the meanings of expressions. But this obviously is not the case.²

¹Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, al-Maḥṣūl, as quoted in Muzhir, p.17

²al-Suyūṭī, al-Muzhir, p. 17.

(2) It is unthinkable that an expression should resemble what is non-existent (ma'dūm); yet some expressions undeniably signify the non-existent.¹

(3) It is also unthinkable that the same expression should resemble two antithetical meanings; yet this is what the "naturalist" position would require us to say of homonyms. It is a fact of language, inexplicable on the "naturalist" view, that some homonyms signify entirely opposite meanings (ajdād).²

To whom these arguments are due, whether to al-Jubbā'ī himself or to later thinkers, is a question to which our sources do not supply an answer. Quite conceivably the third argument, which is based on an essentially philological insight, may have been advanced by the more philologically inclined Mu'tazilites of 'Abbād's own time.

The failure of the "naturalist" view of the origin of language to make an impact in Islam is significant for the development of the idea of the givenness of language. However else this idea would be developed henceforth, it would not be developed along naturalistic lines. Naturalism might

¹Ibn al-Hājib, Muntahā al-wuṣūl, p. 20.

²al-Āmidī, al-Ihkām, p. 38.

have given a sure basis for this idea: a language given in nature, rooted firmly in man's physical environment, would have been a language immune from change and secure against corruption, a language the givenness of which would have been the givenness of nature itself. But the acceptance of such a scheme would have meant the sacrifice of a basic Islamic insight: all permanence is based on the will of God. This insight, which came to be expressed in an atomistic ontology, shared by Mu tazilites and orthodox alike, was inimical to the very idea of nature, as that idea has been understood in the West. The "theological" view of the origin of language extended this insight to language itself. Permanence in language, like permanence in all other realms, must be based, not on such phantasies as an abiding nature, but on the reality of the timeless and immutable will of God.¹

The belief in the divine origin of language had arisen long before al-Jubbā'ī embraced a version of it in opposition to the view of 'Abbād ibn Sulaymān. It had its roots in the old traditionism of the first century and a half of Islam. Traditionists were interested, among other things, in the interpretation of the Koran; and the belief in the divine

¹ Arnaldez, Grammaire et Theologie chez Ibn Hasm, p. 40.

origin of language was based on a broad interpretation of the Koranic statement that "God taught Adam all the names." (Koran II, 31). According to this interpretation, which is recorded by al-Ṭabari,¹ the phrase "all the names" means the names of all existent things: persons, animals, and inanimate objects. This was tantamount to saying that the Koran teaches that God taught Adam language in its entirety.

In addition to this broad interpretation, al-Ṭabari also records a more narrow one,² according to which the phrase "all the names" means either the names of the angels, or the names of Adam's sons. This interpretation was based on the presence of the masculine plural third person pronoun (-hum) in the latter part of the same verse: "Then (having taught Adam all the names) he showed them (-hum, i.e. the things named) to the angels and said: Tell me the names of these, if you are truthful." If God had taught Adam the names of all existent things, so the argument ran, it would have been necessary to use the pronoun -hā, which can refer to both rational and irrational objects, rather than -hum, which can refer only to rational beings, i.e. angels or the sons of Adam.

¹al-Ṭabari, Tafsīr, I, pp. 482-485.

²Ibid., pp. 485-486.

The majority of the exegetes, says al-Ṭabari, accepted the broader interpretation of the phrase "all the names," including the paragon of exegetes, Ibn 'Abbās, to whom innumerable exegetical traditions are attributed in the commentary literature. Maḥdī al-Maḥzūmī points out that Ibn 'Abbās in this matter, as in many others, may have been influenced by Jewish doctrines, i.e. the so-called "Isrā'īlīyāt."¹ The Torah, unlike the Koran, makes Adam the giver of names; but it is quite explicit as to what Adam gives the names to; to everything that passed within Adam's view. This comprehensiveness, when attributed to the Koran, results in a uniquely Islamic doctrine of the divine origin of language. It is quite possible that such a doctrine, based on the Koran, was formulated in direct response to a Jewish doctrine, based on the Torah.

It was in the tenth century that the "theological" view of the origin of language received its first serious challenge. The initiator of this challenge was Abū Ḥāshim, (d.933) son of al-Jubbā'ī, who introduced the "conventionalist" view and in so doing touched off the first real controversy worthy of the name over the origin of language.

¹al-Maḥzūmī, al-Khalīl ibn Ahmad al-Farāhīdī, p. 84.

Abū Hāshim's opponent was the famous al-Ash'arī (d. 935-6), the founder of Sunnite theology. According to Ibn Taymīyah,¹ al-Ash'arī, during his Mu'tazilite days, had accepted the "conventionalist" view, but when he broke with Mu'tazilitism, he gave it up in favor of the "theological" view. This was the view of al-Jubbā'ī, and it may be that in this matter al-Ash'arī was influenced to some extent by his former master. Abū Hāshim, in formulating the "conventionalist" view, had made a departure from the position of his father. This is consistent with what we know in general about the relation of Abū Hāshim to his father. The former founded a separate school of Mu'tazilites, i.e. the Bahshamiyah,² which superseded the school of his father.³ Al-Ash'arī, it then appears, must have been influenced during his Mu'tazilite phase by his fellow-student Abū Hāshim; and when he withdrew from Mu'tazilite circles, he gave up the view of the son in favor of the view of the father.

But there was much more to al-Ash'arī's acceptance of the "theological" view of the origin of language than a

¹Ibn Taymīyah, Kitāb al-Imān, p. 36.

²The term is formed from the name Abū Hāshim.

³H. Nyberg, "al-Mu'tazilah," EI, III, p. 791.

were return to the teaching of a former Mu'tazilite master. Al-Ash'ari was above all else anxious to show his loyalty to the traditionist cause: and since among the people of tradition (ahl al-sunnah) the belief in the divine origin of language ran strong, it is natural that he should have opted for that belief. Moreover, the "conventionalist" view of Abū Hāshim was soon to become a distinctly Mu'tazilite view; and it is frequently so called in the later books of legal theory (uṣūl al-fih). Al-Ash'ari undoubtedly saw that this was the case, and adopted the "theological" view as a direct stand against the Mu'tazilites. The origin of language thus became, for a time, an issue between Mu'tazilites and Sunnite theologians.

The terms around which the controversy revolved were: istilāh, tawādu', and tawāṭu', for convention, and tawqif, ilbām, and wahy, for divine origin.¹ The former set of terms are nearly synonymous; the latter set, however, differ to some extent in meaning. Tawqif literally means "instruction"; it is the infinitival form of the verb waqqafa 'alā, i.e. "to instruct (someone) in, to inform (someone) of." This term conforms rather well to the term ta'lim, which is the infini-

¹These terms are discussed by Loucel in "L'Origine du Langage d'après les grammairiens arabes," *Arabica*, X, fas.3, pp.254-5.

tive of Callama, the word used in the Koran¹ God taught (Callama) Adam all the names." Thus tawqif expressed perfectly that doctrine of the origin of language which arose in traditionalist circles and had its basis in the Koran. The terms ilhām and wahy, on the other hand, which mean "inspiration," do not have this close connection with the Koranic text.

It may be asked: what was it about the "conventionalist" position that commended it to the majority of Mu'tazilites? The answer requires a brief excursion into the ninth century. During that century, the leading minds had been preoccupied with the question of the createdness of the Koran. Of all the issues of those times, this was unquestionably the greatest, since during the reign of al-Ma'mūn (813-833) the doctrine of the createdness of the Koran was elevated to the position of a pledge of allegiance to the Abbasid caliphate. The Mu'tazilites in defending their position emphasized the created nature of speech in general. Speech, they argued, consists of sounds which are ephemeral.¹ God cannot be said to speak (mutakallim) since he does not enter into the ephemeral order; he can only be said to cause speech.² The Koran shares all the qualities of ordinary speech; it came into

¹Abd al-Jabbār, al-Mughnī, VII, pp. 21-23.

²Albert Nader, Falsafat al-Mu'tazilah, p. 106.

being at a fixed time.¹ This emphasis on the mundane nature of speech did not of itself necessitate the notion of the "conventional" origin of language; what is mundane may quite conceivably be divinely established without any human participation. What did lead the Mu'tazilites to adopt the "conventionalist" position was the fact that in traditionist circles the doctrine of the divine origin of language was coming to be associated with a doctrine quite unacceptable to the Mu'tazilites, i.e. that of the uncreatedness of speech: divine speech, to be sure, but speech nonetheless, speech which presupposes language. One argument which al-Ash'arī propounds in support of this traditionist dogma is particularly instructive:

Since God is eternally a knower. . . it is impossible for him to be eternally qualified with the opposite of speech, because the opposite of speech. . . is silence, or a defect, just as the opposite of knowledge. . . is ignorance, or doubt, or a defect.²

In this argument speech and knowledge are closely connected; one is implied in the other. This recalls the Koranic passage in which God is said to have taught all the names to

¹Kabd al-Jabbār, al-Mughnī, VII, pp. 21-23.

²Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī, al-Idānah 'an usūl al-dī-yānah, trans. Klein, p. 67.

Adam. The Arabic word for "teach," i.e. callama, means literally "to cause to know." This is taken to mean much more than simply that God caused Adam to know the names; it means that in informing Adam of the names God caused him to have knowledge.¹ The context bears this out.

And He is Knower of all things. And when thy Lord said unto the angels: Lo I am about to place a viceroy in the earth, they said: Wilt thou place therein one who will do harm therein and will shed blood, while we, we hymn Thy praise and sanctify Thee? He said: Surely I know that which ye know not. And He taught Adam all the names, then showed them to the angels, saying: Inform me of the names of these, if ye are truthful. They said: Be glorified: We have no knowledge save that which Thou hast taught us. Lo, Thou, only Thou, art the Knower, the Wise.²

God thus imparts his own knowledge to Adam by informing Adam of the names. This knowledge marks Adam off as superior even to the angels and worthy of the angels' adoration, as the following verse shows. The association of knowledge with language, evident in this Koranic passage, was to become, with Ibn Hazm, the basis for a "verbal logic."³ In traditionist circles of the ninth century, it tended toward the

¹Arnaldez, Grammaire et Theologie chez Ibn Hazm, pp.43f.

²Pickthall, The Meaning of the Glorious Koran, p. 27.

³Arnaldez, op. cit., pp. 101-103, 121ff. A "verbal logic" is a logic, not of pure concepts in the mind, but of meanings of words, i.e. a logic of language.

belief in the uncreatedness of language. Accordingly, the traditionist view of the origin of language does not imply a beginning of language in the ordinary sense, i.e. a creation of language; it has to do rather with an impartation of language to Adam from above, an infusion into Adam of the divine articulateness. The terms tawqif, ilhām, and wahy are well suited to this idea: they do not signify the creation of language, but the imparting and infusion of it.

It was in reaction to this etherealization of language that the Mu'tazilites adopted the "conventionalist" view of language. This view was most consistent with the Mu'tazilite emphasis on the createdness of all speech. Language, in the Mu'tazilite view, is not a transcendental reality bestowed from heaven upon the creature man. Language is of man, and being of man is also of the creation. The creator of all things is of course God: in this sense, language, though arising from human convention, is the product of divine creativity; but so are all the affairs of man. In the occasionalism of the Mu'tazilites, the divine creativity extends to all that is, save the being of God himself. The issue in the tenth century controversy over the origin of language was, then, not whether language is created by God or not; but whether language is of man, i.e. of the creation, or of eternity.

Another factor which rendered the "conventionalist" view commendable to the Mu'tazilites was their philological erudition. The connection between the Mu'tazilites and early philology has been pointed out by Nyberg.¹ The Mu'tazilites, philologists at heart, were keenly aware that Arabic was the language of the Arabs. This awareness led them to adopt the philological method of Koran interpretation,² according to which the philological principles derived from the study of pre-Islamic poetry were counted valid for the interpretation of the Koran. The Mu'tazilites thus presupposed an uninterrupted continuity between the language of the Arabs and that of the Koran. This philological point of view was not shared by the strict traditionists, who in their interpretation of the Koran relied exclusively on exegetical traditions handed down from the age of the Companions.³ For traditionists, discontinuity between the language of the Arabs and that of the Koran was more apparent than continuity. The belief in the transcendental origin of Arabic emphasized this discontinuity. The language of the Koran was considered to be unique,

¹H. Nyberg, "al-Mu'tazilah," EI, III, p. 791.

²Goldziher, Richtungen, pp. 116ff.

³Ibid., pp. 55ff.

not in the sense of being other than the language actually in use among the Arabs, but in the sense of being a purer form of that language than any actual dialect, a form corresponding fully to the transcendental archetype bestowed upon Adam. The "conventionalist" view was an explicit rejection of the withdrawal of the Koran from the realm of ordinary language.

The arguments used by either side in the "conventionalist-theological" controversy are presented in two important philological works of the late tenth century, i.e. the Kitāb al-Sāhibī of Ibn Fāris and the al-Khaṣa'is of Ibn Jinnī, as well as in the books of legal theory (uṣūl al-fiqh) of the eleventh century and after. To what extent these arguments are to be attributed to the original disputants, al-Ash'arī and Abū Hāshim, is not known; however, it is fairly certain that they were all advanced during the course of the tenth century, if not by al-Ash'arī and Abū Hāshim themselves, then by their immediate followers.

The arguments (adillah) were divided into two types: those based on authority (naql) and those based on reason (ʿaql). The chief argument from authority¹ used by the par-

¹al-Shawkānī, Irshād al-fuḥūl, p. 11.

tisans of the "theological" view was derived from the Koranic text previously discussed (p. 19, i.e. Koran II, 31). This text was interpreted broadly after the tradition of Ibn 'Abbās; God taught Adam all the names, i.e. the names of all existent things. Pains were taken to show not only that the names mentioned included the names of all things, but also that the word "name" includes all three parts of speech: noun (called "name" in Arabic), verb, and particle. In short, it was stressed that language in its entirety was conferred by God on Adam.

As an argument from reason,¹ advocates of the "theological" view made the following point: Language could not have originated in convention, because any convention presupposes language. How can a group of people assemble for the purpose of establishing language without some means of communicating their intention to each other? Granted that a convention is preceded by some sort of language, then can the "conventionalist" hypothesis that language would have been established by a convention, which in turn would have required a further prior language, and so on ad infinitum. The gist of the argument is that there is no logically conceivable starting point in the process, for every convention presup-

¹al-shawkānī, Irshād al-fuḥūl, p. 11.

poses language. The only solution to the dilemma is a belief in the divine conferment of language.

The "conventionalists" in turn advanced the following arguments: As an argument from authority,¹ they cited the Koranic verse which says: "We never sent a messenger save with the language of his people" (XIV, 4). This implies that language precedes revelation. The "theological" view implies a prior revelation of language preceding the revelation proper; but this is a duplication of revelations for which there is no justification in authority. Arguing from reason,² the "conventionalists" proceeded thus: If God is the author of language, then to know language, i.e. to know that expressions are established for certain meanings, is to know something about God. This implies a necessary knowledge within man of God, which renders human responsibility (taklīf), presumably the responsibility placed upon man to seek the knowledge of God, meaningless. Moreover, how could God convey language to man when he himself possesses no physical members?³ Instruction in language requires the use of the hands in pointing to the objects to which the names being taught belong.

¹al-Shawkānī, Irshād al-fuhūl, p. 12.

²Ibid.

³Ibn Jinnī, al-Khaṣā'is, p. 45.

In other words, the idea of the divine origin of language requires an anthropomorphic representation of God.

With each side advancing arguments of this sort, the controversy eventually reached an impasse. In the early eleventh century, a Shafi'ite jurist, Abū Ishāq al-Isfarā'īnī (d. 1027), proposed what amounted to a compromise between the "theological" and "conventionalist" views. According to him, God created a kind of minimal language, sufficient to enable mankind to meet its basic needs and to enter into social relations necessary to the establishment of conventions. Through convention, then, language could develop beyond the original minimal stage. Thus language was a phenomenon inaugurated by God and augmented by man.¹

This compromise did not gain wide acceptance, the reason being that the controversy over the origin of language was itself on the decline in the eleventh century. The person who more than anyone else was responsible for closing the books on the matter was the great jurist-theologian, al-Bāqil-lānī (d. 1013). His declaration that neither the "theological" nor the "conventionalist" points of view have conclusive evidence on their side and that therefore the question of

¹al-ʿAmidī, al-Ihkām, p. 39; al-Suyūṭī, al-Muzhir, pp. 20f

the origin of language should be held in suspension¹ was taken as the last word on the subject by most of the theologians and legal theorists of later times.² It is significant that al-Bāqillānī, an Ashʿarite, should have drawn the curtains on the "theological-conventionalist" controversy. This shows that in his time the origin of language had ceased to be a live issue between Muʿtazilites and orthodox theologians. The fact is that even some orthodox theologians had been drawn to the "conventionalist" view.³ Here, as in other matters, the influence of the Muʿtazilites on orthodox thought is to be detected. It is known that Abū Hāshim, the original propagator of the "conventionalist" view, influenced orthodox theology in respect to another very important matter, i.e. the doctrine of modes (ahwāl).⁴ In legal theory also the impact of the Muʿtazilites was considerable, as we shall see in the next section.

¹al-ʿAmidī, al-Iḥkām, p. 39; al-Suyūṭī, al-Muḥḥir, I, pp. 20f.

²"qāla bihi al-jumhūr," al-Shawkānī, Irshād al-fuḥūl, p. 11; cf. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, al-Tafsīr al-kabīr, I, pp. 22-23.

³This is inferred from a statement of al-ʿAmidī that some of the mutakallimūn held the "conventionalist" view; see al-ʿAmidī, Muntahā al-sūl, p. 17.

⁴L. Gardet, "al-Jubbāʾī," EI (new edition).

The failure of the "theological" view of language to retain its position as a distinctively orthodox doctrine is due to the fact that the strict traditionalist version of the doctrine of the uncreatedness of the Koran, which had given rise to that view, i.e. the version which set forth the uncreatedness of the Koran in terms of the uncreatedness of the actual Arabic expressions in the Koran,¹ had lost favor in orthodox theological circles. A new version was taking its place, according to which the uncreatedness of divine speech meant, not the uncreatedness of ordinary speech, but the uncreatedness of an attribute inhering in the divine nature, i.e. the attribute of articulateness, which came to be expressed by means of the term kalam.² The divine articulateness was considered as independent of ordinary verbal speech, of language, as pertaining to thought and meanings rather than actual words. This permitted the orthodox theologians to take a somewhat casual attitude to the question of the origin of language. Language consists of the union of expressions, i.e. sounds, and meanings, and since one of the components in the union belonged to the realm of ephemeral created things,

¹H. Laoust, "Ahmad b. Hanbal," EI (new edition), I, p. 275.

²al-Ijī, al-Mawāqif, pp. 293-294; al-Rāzī, Tafsīr, I, p.30

so did the whole. From henceforth the question of the origin of language was a question, not of whether language was a transcendent reality conferred upon man or a created phenomenon arising out of human convention, but of whether language, as a created phenomenon, was brought into being through divine fiat alone, or through human instrumentality (i.e. convention). Framed in this way, the question lost the importance which it had in al-Ash'arī's time, and al-Bāqillānī's neutralism is altogether appropriate. From al-Bāqillānī's time onward, the divine origin of language is, at least among the majority of legal theorists and theologians, only a theoretical possibility (ihtimāl), to be entertained but not espoused. The same is true also of the conventional origin of language.

The belief in the divine origin of language did not disappear altogether, however, but continued to be asserted by two ultra-conservative groups within Islam: the Zāhirites, especially Ibn Ḥazm (d. 1064),¹ and the Ḥanbalites. Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 1328), the chief representative of Ḥanbalite thought, insisted that the "conventionalist" view was an innovation, devised by certain scholars as a justification for the notion

¹Arnaldez, Grammaire et Théologie chez Ibn Hazm, pp. 37-

of metaphor.¹ For him the first three centuries of Islam are absolutely normative, and he does not doubt that the belief in the divine origin of language was prevalent in these centuries. Thus Ibn Taymīyah champions the traditionalist view of language, as al-Ash'arī had purported to do, though the school which the latter founded did not follow his lead.

* * * * *

It now remains to show what significance the controversy over the origin of language and its decline has for the development of the idea of the givenness of language. We have said at the beginning of this section that the chief concern in the discussions of the origin of language was to show on what ground the givenness of language, i.e. the givenness of the expression-meaning relation, can be established. The advocates of the "theological" view took the position that the givenness of language was dependent on the givenness of the divine nature itself; language is a transcendental reality issuing from the articulateness of God, which is one

¹According to Ibn Taymīyah, metaphor, as the use of an expression for a meaning other than that for which it has been established, is possible only if the original establishment is by convention, i.e. is such that it can be suspended. This presupposes that only what is established by convention can be suspended; what is of divine origin cannot. See Ibn Taymīyah, Kitāb al-Imān, pp. 34ff.

and the same as the knowledge of God; it is conferred upon men by instruction or inspiration. The advocates of the "conventionalist" view, on the other hand, made the givenness of language a direct outcome of human cooperation; wise men, in consultation with one another, ordain what shall be the names of things, what shall be the language spoken by themselves and their descendents. The results of these concerted efforts are absolutely final. Once brought into being, language remains always the same, a given for the people which uses it.

The decline of the controversy over the origin of language and the relegation of the "theological" and "conventionalist" views to the realm of theoretical possibility show that neither of these accounts of the givenness of language was accepted by the majority of the speculative theologians and legal theorists. This does not mean that the givenness of language was unimportant to them; the later development of the "linguistic premises" of the science of the principles of jurisprudence is, as we shall see, proof that it was important to them. What their neutrality respecting the origin of language signifies is that the givenness of language was accepted as a fact which simply did not require further justification. That such a thing as the language of the Arabs existed prior to the time of the Prophet, that the Koran and

gunnah were written in this language, and that therefore a knowledge of this language was fundamental to the understanding of Koran and Sunnah--all this was justification enough for the idea of the givenness of language. Precisely how Arabic came into being was a matter of detail. The fact was, it was there, a given to be taken at face value.

The emphasis which early traditionists had placed on the discontinuity between the language of the Arabs and that of the Koran disappeared among later orthodox theologians. The philological method of Koran interpretation advanced by the Mu'tazilites eventually triumphed, as is evident in the commentaries of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1209) and al-Bayḍawī (d. 1286). Therefore there was nothing objectionable about considering the language of the Arabs, i.e. the language known through the lexicographers, basic to the science of Koran interpretation (ʿilm al-tafsīr) and other religious sciences. It was this language which was taken as the given. The Koran remained its highest expression, its "miracle," but the language of the Prophet and the language of the Arabs were essentially one in their givenness.

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A final word is in order concerning the rise of the term waqʿ and its use in the context of the controversy over

the origin of language. The term ultimately became a designation simply for the establishment of language; as such it emphasized the common ground between the "theological" and "conventionalist" views of language, namely the conviction that the relation between expressions and their meanings was based on fiat, not upon any intrinsic connection between expression and meaning. Expressions could be related to meanings quite otherwise than they in fact are: "black" could mean "white," and so on. The reason why expressions do mean what they mean is that they have been assigned to their meanings. The term waḍʿ thus emphasized the supra-natural character of the expression-meaning relation, though it was neutral with respect to the origin of language.

This neutrality did not always characterize the term waḍʿ. The first to have used it, as it appears, were the Muʿtazilites, and with them it clearly had reference to the establishment of language by convention, rather than by divine fiat. A brief look at the Kitāb al-Muʿtamad of the Muʿtazilite legal theorist Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī (d. 1044) reveals that this is so. The verb waḍaʿa is used synonymously with istalāha.¹

¹istalāh is occasionally used where waḍaʿa normally appears in definitions of majāz, i.e. "al-majāz mā ufida bihi maʿnan muṣṭalaḥan ʿalayhi ghayramā uṣṭuliḥa ʿalayhi fī aṣl tilk al-muwaḍaʿah," Abū al-Ḥusayn, al-Muʿtamad, p. 16.

The Ṣāhirite Ibn Ḥazm also quite clearly associates the term waḍʿ with istilāḥ.¹

In fact, the Kitāb al-Muʿtamad displays two meanings of the term waḍʿ. In addition to meaning the establishment of language by convention, it also in many instances means the "establishment" of language by lexicographers. This ambivalence is such that in some cases it is not certain in which meaning the term waḍʿ is to be taken. Probably the use of the term to describe the work of the lexicographers is the earlier one. Frequently in Arabic the term waḍaʿa has the sense of composing, or writing: "waḍaʿtu kitāban" means "I wrote a book." In keeping with this sense, the lexicographers (ahl al-lughah) are said to have "established" Arabic (waḍaʿu al-ʿarabiyyah),² meaning that they had set Arabic in writing, recorded Arabic. For this reason, the lexicographers are sometimes called the ahl al-waḍʿ.³

When the controversy over the origin of language first began with al-Ashʿari and Abū Ḥāshim, the term waḍʿ as such was apparently not used by either side. A cognate of waḍʿ,

¹waḍʿ tends to appear, in Ibn Ḥazm, as part of the phrase istilāḥ ʿalā waḍʿ; see Ibn Ḥazm, al-Ihkām, p. 30.

²al-Nadīm, al-Fihrist, p. 34.

³al-ʿAmīdī, al-Ihkām, pp. 11-12.

i.e. tawādu^c, was used to express the conventional origin of language; but wad^c itself must have been restricted, during the early phases of the controversy, to the work of the lexicographers. However, as the notion of the conventional origin of language became firmly rooted in the minds of the Mu^ctazilites, the term wad^c came to be used for the original establishment of language, i.e. came to be synonymous with its cognate tawādu^c, as well as the other term for convention, i.e. istilāh.

The term wad^c would hardly have been acceptable to the traditionists with their transcendental view of language, or even to al-Ash'ari, to the extent that he represented the traditionist point of view. Wad^c implied a coming into being in time, a notion which was not applicable to uncreated speech. Ṭawqif, wahy, and ilhām were far more suitable.

When the doctrine of uncreated speech came to be divorced from the notion of language as a transcendental reality and redefined by the speculative theologians in terms of the attribute of articulateness inherent in God, the unsuitability of wad^c as a term for the divine origin of language ceased. Those who now wished to consider language as having a divine origin could appropriate the term wad^c for their own purpose. Thus wad^c, which among the Mu^ctazilites meant establishment

by convention, could now mean establishment by divine fiat. Through this extension, the term then came to represent the common element in both views, as stated above; the supernatural character of language, of the expression-meaning relation.

Thus the term wadʿ, rather than expressing a particular doctrine of the origin of language, comes to express the present status of language as "established." What matters henceforth is not the manner in which language came into being at some remote point in the past--that is an unknown; what matters is the status of language now, as a given, a starting point of thought. In the following section, we will see how this notion of the givenness of language as a present fact was developed in Muslim legal theory (uṣūl al-fiqh).

"waḍḥ al-Lughah" and the Principles of Jurisprudence

Since it was within the science of the principles of jurisprudence that the term waḍḥ came into its own as an expression for the givenness of language, our investigations in this section will take us into the literature of that science. The first to introduce the term waḍḥ into the vocabulary of Islamic legal theory were the Muṭazilites. Although with them the term connoted a conventional origin of language, this connotation was accidental to the central significance of the term in Muṭazilite legal thought. In the main, the term waḍḥ is a designation for the establishment of all the linguistic givens which the legal theorist must take into account. Only what is established in language is relevant to the interpretation of texts. The successors of the Muṭazilites in the field of legal theory were the scholastic theologians, who introduced into their books a special introductory section which dealt exclusively with the givens of language. This section was placed under the heading "linguistic premises" (al-mabādi' al-lughawiyah), and within the "linguistic premises" the term waḍḥ served as a focal point.

Our study will thus be concerned primarily with that

group of legal theorists characterized as mutakallimūn (speculative theologians). Both the Mu'tazilite and later scholastic legal theorists belonged to this group.¹ According to Ibn Khaldūn,² the mutakallim legal theorists were one of two groups who wrote on the principles of jurisprudence; the other group were the Hanafite jurists (fuqahā al-hanafīyah). The mutakallim legal theorists are sometimes called Shāfi'ites, since most of them were in fact adherents of the Shāfi'ite rite. The great al-Ghazzālī himself was a Shāfi'ite. The mutakallimūn, or "speculative theologians," were in many respects the leading spirits in legal theory and thus were Shāfi'ite in more than name. Like al-Shāfi'ī himself, they insisted that all legal rulings must be properly derived from sources; and thus like al-Shāfi'ī they fostered a critical attitude toward older juristic practice. The Hanafite jurists, on the other hand, had ulterior motives in their legal theorizing; they wished to provide, in the face of al-Shāfi'ī's

¹Strictly speaking, the Mu'tazilites are of course not mutakallimūn; however, within the context of legal theory they may be classed as mutakallimūn, since together with the later mutakallimūn they represent a distinct school of legal thought. Ibn Khaldūn includes in his list of chief mutakallim legal works two works by Mu'tazilites; see Ibn Khaldūn, al-Muqaddimah, p. 455.

²Ibn Khaldūn, loc. cit.

challenge, a theoretical justification for the established practice of the Hanafite school. Their purpose was to set forth the rules whereby, in their opinion, the great jurists of the past, i.e. Abū Ḥanīfah, al-Shaybānī, Abū Yūsuf, had derived their rulings from the sources. What prompted them was the fact that the great jurists had not indicated these rules as al-Shāfi'ī had done.

Since the speculative theologians were the truer theorists, it was fitting that they should have been much concerned with what-is-established (mawḏūʿ) in language, i.e. in wadʿ al-lughah. They were interested in nothing more than the correct derivation of legal rulings from the texts, which was essentially a matter of interpretation; and in their interpretation of the texts what-is-established in language was their primary point of reference. Juristic precedent did not enter into the interpretation of texts at all. Again, like al-Shāfi'ī, they posed a challenge to which the Hanafites had to respond. Eventually the Hanafites, in spite of their deference to precedent, were also obliged to take into consideration what-is-established in language. The term wadʿ ultimately made its way into Hanafite legal vocabulary, as a brief look at the book of Fakhr al-Islām al-Pazdawī (d. 1089) reveals. However, the Hanafites never went as far as

to formulate "linguistic premises" as the subject matter of a special introduction, or prolegomenon, to their legal theory. In the Hanafite books of legal theory the givens of language are always dealt with in a section on "al-Kitāb" (i.e. the Koran).

The concern of the speculative theologians with what-is-established in language is traceable to al-Shāfi'ī himself. Although the term wadʿ as a technical term does not appear in al-Shāfi'ī's famous treatise, the Risālah, the underlying idea to which the term wadʿ gave expression, i.e. that of the givenness of language, is implicit throughout the Risālah. One of the principle points that one grasps from the opening pages of the Risālah is that an understanding of the text of the Koran requires an anterior understanding of the language in which the text is written. Al-Shāfi'ī takes pains to emphasize the Arabic character of the Koran and the obligation imposed on every Muslim to learn Arabic. Only to one who knows Arabic well will the clarity of the Koran be apparent.¹ Arabic is for al-Shāfi'ī a deposit of linguistic data preserved in the memories of the community as a whole.²

¹al-Shāfi'ī, al-Risālah, p. 50.

²Ibid., pp. 42-44.

The principle that the Koran can be clearly understood through a mastery of the Arabic language is one of the important contributions of al-Shāfi'ī. He is often credited with having emphasized the importance of tradition as a source of law, in keeping with the spirit of the traditionist movement.¹ What he is less commonly noted for is his having created a rudimentary system of hermeneutics, based on considerations of language, whereby the Koran itself could be correctly interpreted and the excesses of traditionism checked. Some extreme traditionists had affirmed that nothing in the Koran could be understood apart from tradition. A class of traditions evolved which were concerned entirely with Koran interpretation, interpretation based not on considerations of language, but exclusively upon utterances allegedly handed down from the contemporaries of the Prophet, or from the Prophet himself.² Such traditions naturally indulged in no little "eisegesis," seeking to find in the verses of the Koran support for partisan doctrines. The unrestrained proliferation of traditions of this sort might have obscured for all time the true meaning of the Koran. The best guarantee against

¹Schacht, An Introduction to Islamic Law, pp. 47-48.

²Goldziher, Richtungen, pp. 55ff.

an ascendancy of tradition over the Book of God was a system of interpretation rooted in a knowledge of the language. Thus language itself, as a given, an established norm, provided a check against the arbitrary growth of "exegetical" traditions. Waq' al-lughah is present in the spirit, if not the letter, of al-Shāfi'ī's Risālah.

In the following pages, we will consider briefly the use of the term waq' in Mu'tazilite legal theory, and then somewhat more extensively the role of waq' as a focal point of the "legal premises" of the later scholastics.

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The rise of Mu'tazilite interest in the science of the principles of jurisprudence in the tenth century is one of the major events in the history of that science. The Mu'tazilites brought to the study of legal theory and hermeneutics a high degree of philological proficiency and sophistication which had long been characteristic of their movement. The close connection between the Mu'tazilites and early philology has already been referred to (see above, p. 27). The great philologists of the tenth century, al-Fārisī (d. 987) and Ibn Jinnī (d. 1001), are said by al-Suyūṭī¹ to have been

¹al-Suyūṭī, al-Muzhir,^I p. 10.

Mu'tazilites. Moreover, long before the Mu'tazilites turned their attention to legal hermeneutics, they had exercised their philological skills in the field of Koran exegesis (taf-sir al-Qur'ān), developing a distinctly philological method of interpretation. The first known Mu'tazilite exegete, according to Goldziher,¹ was Abū Bakr al-Aṣamm, who lived in the early ninth century (d. 850).

Our chief source on Mu'tazilite legal theory is the Kitāb al-Mu'tamad of Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī (d. 1044), who summarizes therein the views of his predecessors. The earliest of the Mu'tazilites cited by Abū al-Ḥusayn is al-Jubbā'ī (d. 916), so that we may infer that Mu'tazilite legal thought began around the start of the tenth century. Also cited are Abū Hāshim (d. 933) and two important members of the school founded by him: Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī al-Baṣrī (d. 978-9) and 'Abd al-Jabbār ibn Aḥmad al-Asadābādī (d. 1026). The latter, who was the teacher of Abū al-Ḥusayn, was undoubtedly the most important figure in Mu'tazilite legal thought. Under the Buwayhid vizier, Ibn 'Abbād (d. 995), who favored Mu'tazilitism, he was appointed chief judge (Qāḍī al-quḍāh).

¹Goldziher, Richtungen, p. 113.

of the province of Rayy.¹ He wrote a book on the principles of jurisprudence entitled Kitāb al-ahd, which is mentioned by Ibn Khaldūn² as one of the chief sources used later by Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī (d. 1156) and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1209) in the formation of the mutakallim variety of Muslim legal theory. The frequency with which the name of 'Abd al-Jabbār is mentioned in later books on the principles of jurisprudence is testimony to the importance which this Mu'tazilite had on the course of Islamic legal theory in general. Unfortunately the Kitāb al-ahd is not extant; however we may regard the Kitāb al-Mu'tamad of Abū al-Ḥusayn as a student's exposition of the system of his master.

The term waq' appears in the Kitāb al-Mu'tamad in connection with discussions of certain features of language: homonymity, generality, idiom, and metaphor. Since these features are basic to the system of interpretation propounded by Abū al-Ḥusayn, he takes care to show that they are "established." Thus the term waq' is used on the level of generalization. It has a bearing on both the particular and the general facts of language. One can say that the particular word

¹S. Stern, "Abd al-Djabbār," EI (new edition).

²Ibn Khaldūn, al-Muqaddimah, p. 455.

"man" is established for the idea "rational animal." One can also say that a homonym is an expression which is established for a plurality of meanings in the manner of alternation (Calā al-badal).¹ It is with statements of the latter type that wadʿ has to do in the Kitāb al-Muʿtamad, as well as in the legal works of the later scholastics.

We will confine our attention to Abū al-Ḥusayn's discussion of the establishment of metaphor, which is the feature of language with which he as a Muʿtazilite is most concerned, and deal with the other features of language when we come to the scholastics, who discuss them at greater length.

In connection with metaphor, the term wadʿ is used in a manner that requires special clarification. The metaphor is defined as an expression which is used to signify a meaning other than the meaning for which it has been established (wudiʿa).² The word "lion," for example, has been established for a particular kind of animal. When used to signify a courageous man, it has actually been severed from the meaning for which it is established and transferred to another meaning. For this reason, those who rejected meta-

¹Abū al-Ḥusayn, al-Muʿtamad, pp. 22-23.

²Ibid., p. 17.

phor argued that metaphor represented a usage of language contrary to its original establishment; it was a violation of language itself. The Mu'tazilites therefore were bound to show that metaphor, rather than being a violation of language, was a very part of language. However, to affirm that metaphors are established in the same sense as other words would be to concede too much; it would deprive metaphors of their distinctiveness and cause them to be assimilated to ordinary words. This is in fact how some of the opponents of the Mu'tazilites disposed of metaphor. The word "lion," they said, was established for two meanings: "predatory animal" (al-hayawān al-muftaris) and "courageous man" (al-raḡul al-shujāʿ). It could be used in either meaning, in the manner of a homonym.¹ Each usage is a separate legitimate usage in accordance with a separate establishment. There was then no question of an expression's being transferred from its proper meaning to another. Abū al-Ḥusayn realized that this account of the matter was entirely misleading. It implied that "lion" may be used in either of its meanings without any reference to the other meaning, i.e. that each meaning is independent of the other. In reality, this is not the

¹Abū al-Ḥusayn, al-Mu'tamad, p. 29.

case, as he points out. One meaning, i.e. "courageous man," is subordinate to the other, i.e. "predatory animal"; the first cannot be grasped until the second is taken into account. This subordination arises from the fact that the two meanings stand in a relation of comparison (tashbīh); "lion" signifies "courageous man" by virtue of a similarity between this meaning and the proper meaning; therefore the meaning "courageous man" cannot be grasped until the meaning "predatory animal" has first been apprehended.¹ In order to preserve this subordination of metaphorical meanings to proper meanings, Abū al-Ḥusayn is obliged to retain and justify the stand definition of metaphor as an expression used in a meaning other than the meaning for which it is established. His justification consists in showing that this transference of a word from one meaning to another (subordinate) meaning is itself established. However, rather than using the term waḍʿ for this establishment, he uses the term muwāḍaʿah; consequently we find in the Kitāb al-Muʿtamad an almost paradoxical juxtaposition of waḍʿ and muwāḍaʿah. A metaphor is an expression established (muwāḍaʿah) to signify a meaning other than the

¹Abū al-Ḥusayn, al-Muʿtamad, p. 29.

one for which it is originally established (wad^c).¹ Wad^c then comes to take on a specialized meaning which is more restricted than that of muwāda'ah; it refers specifically to the establishment of expressions for their proper meanings. There is here a sense that, though metaphor is truly a part of language, there is nevertheless in language a basic substratum, a core, of proper meanings upon which all metaphor is built. The term wad^c comes to be associated with this core; therefore the establishment of metaphor must be expressed by some other term. The fact that a cognate of wad^c is chosen is significant. Though metaphor is not established in the same primal sense as non-metaphors, it is nevertheless established in some sense; and being established it is therefore a "given" of language.

Having thus accorded to metaphor the status of a "given," Abū al-Ḥusayn is free to employ the notion of metaphor whenever the occasion arises in the elaboration of the Mu tazilite system of legal thought. In the first main section of the Kitāb al-Mu'tamad, which deals with commands and prohibitions,² the categories of metaphor and non-metaphor (haqīqah) already

¹Abū al-Ḥusayn, al-Mu'tamad, p. 35.

²Ibid., pp. 43-180.

plays an important role. Thus we have in Mu'tazilite legal theory the rudiments of a linguistic prolegomenon in which the established givens of language, metaphor as well as other features of language, are set forth as a point of reference, a basis, for the main work of the legal theorist, i.e. the correct interpretation of the texts of sacred law.

* * * * *

It is in the works of the scholastic legal theorists that we find the idea of the givenness of language most thoroughly worked out. The term "scholastic" is used here to describe those speculative theologians (mutakallimūn) who like their name-sakes in Christian Europe attempted to create a synthesis of faith and reason, dogma and pagan learning, within a predominantly Aristotelian framework. Nyberg¹ has called ninth century Mu'tazilitism the first Muslim scholasticism, but this application of the term is not entirely appropriate since the Mu'tazilites, while they did work toward a synthesis of sorts between faith and reason, did not do so in the manner of Aristotelians. Consequently, the early Ash'arite theologians, i.e. those from al-Ash'arī (d. 935) to al-Bāqillānī (d. 1013), cannot be properly called scholastics

¹H. Nyberg, "al-Mu'tazilah," EI, III, p. 790.

either, in the strict sense, since their conceptual scheme was drawn from the Mu'tazilites.

Al-Ghazzālī (d. 1111) is generally recognized to have been the first to introduce Aristotelian logic into the mainstream of Islamic thought,¹ although it has not been fully determined to what extent his master, al-Juwaynī (d. 1085), may have begun the process. Prior to al-Ghazzālī, Aristotelianism had been confined to the philosophical movement (falsafah), which until the beginning of the twelfth century had followed its own separate course. Thanks to al-Ghazzālī and those who followed him, the organon of Aristotle became, with certain modifications, the organon of Muslim speculative theology (kalām). The result of this appropriation was an Islamic scholasticism truly worthy of the name.

The efforts of the Muslim scholastics in the field of the principles of jurisprudence brought into being a distinctly scholastic school of legal thought. Al-Ghazzālī himself composed a book on the principles of jurisprudence, called the Mustasfā, in which he employed the Aristotelian method of definition and proof. This book, however, was superceded by two twelfth century works, al-Ihkām fī usūl al-ahkām by al-Āmidī (d. 1156) and al-Maḥṣūl fī usūl al-fiqh by Fakhr

¹Nashshar, Manāhij al-Baḥth, pp. 130-138.

al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1209), which became the basis of all later works in scholastic legal theory, e.g. the Minhaj al-wuṣūl ilā ʿilm al-uṣūl of al-Bayḍawī (d. 1286) and the Mukhtaṣar al-Muntaḥā al-uṣūlī of Ibn al-Ḥājib (d. 1248), upon the latter of which al-ʿIṣī (d. 1355), the paragon of Muslim scholastics, commented.

The impact of the Aristotelian logic, in the form perpetuated by Islāmic scholasticism, on the science of the principles of jurisprudence was strongest, not in the area of legal reasoning, but in the matter of the systemization of that science. Legal reasoning continued along more or less traditional lines, the chief method of inference being analogy. The syllogism, introduced by al-Ghazzālī, never became germane to the legal science; indeed strict deduction is generally not characteristic of legal systems. In al-ʿAmidī and al-Rāzī the focus is upon analogy.

The systemization of the science of the principles of jurisprudence by the scholastics was a direct working out of the Aristotelian notion of science, which was known to the Muslims from the Posterior Analytics. This notion had given rise to an encyclopedic tendency among the Muslims which was first manifest in philosophical circles, beginning with the organization of the sciences by al-Kindī (d. ca 873) and al-

Farabi (d. 950) and continuing in the polyhistorical writings of the Brethren of Purity (Ikhwān al-safā), who flourished in the late tenth century. Eventually the idea of the sciences as interrelated parts of a body of knowledge was taken over by orthodox theologians, and became the basis for a classification of the sciences that form the subject matter of a copious encyclopedic literature in Islam.¹ The science of the principles of jurisprudence thus became part of a system of sciences.

According to the Aristotelian formulation, any science is composed of three basic constituents;² the subject matter, i.e. that concerning which something is to be demonstrated; the theorems, i.e. that which is to be demonstrated; the premises, i.e. that upon which the demonstration is based, or from which the demonstration proceeds. The premises are either propositions or definitions taken from other sciences, or axioms accepted as valid in themselves. As the starting points of demonstration, the premises are the givens of a science,

¹Von Hammer made a study of this literature based on Hajji Khalifah. See Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall, Encyklopädische Uebersicht der Wissenschaften des Orients (1804); "Ueber die encyklopadie der Perser, Araber, und Turken," Denkschriften der Königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Vienna; Philosophisch-historische classe, 1856-59.

²M. Grene, A Portrait of Aristotle, pp. 85-93.

that upon which the science is based and apart from which the science cannot proceed.

The Muslims applied the Aristotelian notion of science not only to the sciences which they acquired from the Greeks and with which that notion had originally been associated, but also to their own traditional sciences. Consequently the notion of the premises of a science came to be extended to include not only the givens of reason, i.e. the first principles, intuitively perceived, from which Aristotle had derived his entire system, but also the givens of tradition, acquired through reliable report and providing religious, legal, and linguistic information.

We find the Aristotelian notion of science first rigorously applied to the science of the principles of jurisprudence by al-Āmidī in his al-īḥkām fī uṣūl al-ahkām.¹ The subject matter (mawḍūʿ) of that science is, according to him, the verbal directives (adāliyah) of Koran and Sunnah; the theorems (masāʾil) to be demonstrated are the legal values of these directives; and the premises (al-mabādī) are certain propositions which have been established in other sciences, namely the science of theology (ʿilm al-kalām) and the science of Arabic. In addition there are premises which are peculiar

¹al-Āmidī, al-īḥkām, pp. 4-5.

to the science of the principles of jurisprudence which have to do with purely legal concepts. In all, then, there are three main categories of premises in the science of the principles of jurisprudence: theological premises (al-mabādi' al-kalāmīyah), linguistic premises (al-mabādi' al-lughawīyah), and legal premises (al-mabādi' al-fiqhīyah). These constitute the initial givens of the science, without which legal theory would be unthinkable.

The legal premises are concerned primarily with definition and have no basis outside jurisprudence. The theological and linguistic premises, on the other hand, are concerned with verities the givenness of which is independent of the science of which they are a part: namely, the attributes of God and the Prophet, and the attributes of language. Both language and the divine nature are given the status of timeless realities, the knowledge of which is fundamental to legal theory. The divine nature must be known, since the laws with which the legal theory has to do are God's laws. Language must be known, since the laws are embodied in verbal directives and can be grasped only as the expressions are understood. Again, as with the Mu'tazilites, this requires more than an acquaintance with the meanings of particular words; it also requires an understanding of the principle features of language.

The formation of the "linguistic premises" thus brings to a culmination that conviction which had begun with al-Shāfi'ī and was fostered by the Mu'tazilites, namely the conviction that there are certain linguistic facts, or givens, which must be known before the work of legal theorizing proper can begin. The Mu'tazilites, in dealing with the givens of language, made frequent use of the term waq', which we have taken to be the fullest expression of the Islamic idea of the givenness of language. In the next pages, we will see how this term provided a focal point for the "linguistic premises" formulated by the scholastics, and how the idea of the givenness of language was thus systematically developed.

The centrality of the concept of waq' al-lughah within the "linguistic premises" is attested by the use of a derivative of waq' as an occasional designation for those premises, i.e. al-mawḍū'āt al-lughawīyah, "linguistic givens."¹ This designation is less common than al-mabādī' al-lughawīyah, which follows the more correct philosophical usage and distinguishes the premises from the subject matter, for which the accepted philosophical term is mawḍū'. However, the use of al-mawḍū'āt al-lughawīyah is, in spite of its relative rarity, significant

¹Ibn al-Hājib, Mukhtaṣar al-Muntahā, p. 16.

in that it emphasizes the givenness of language as a starting point of legal theory. There is, in fact, a givenness in both the premises and subject matter of a science. The premises are those givens which are taken either from other sciences or from pure reason as the basis of demonstration and the subject matter is that given to which the science qua science is directed. Apart from the givenness of premises and subject matter no science is possible.

It is an accepted principle in Islamic thought that that which is established can be known only through transmission.¹ This is to a large extent self-evident, as the establishment of an expression for a meaning is essentially a fact of history and, in the absence of any inherent connection between expression and meaning detectable by reason, can be known only as information about it is passed down through a line of reliable transmitters in the manner of all historical information. Consequently, the subject of transmission (naql) takes its place within the "linguistic premises." The heading under which it appears is: the knowledge of waq^c (ma^crifat al-waq^c), or the knowledge of language (ma^crifat al-lughah). Lughah and waq^c are here, as elsewhere, closely

¹ al-Shawkānī, Irshād al-fuhūl, p. 13.

related terms; the knowledge of one is the same as the knowledge of the other.

The interconnection between the terms waq̣ and sunnah, mentioned in the Introduction (see above, pp. 5-6), is made more poignant by the fact that the study of the transmission of waq̣ takes its leading principles from the science of the transmission of sunnah, i.e. the science of hadith-criticism (jarh wa-ta'dil). This application of hadith-criticism to the domain of language had already begun before the Muslim scholastics had entered the field of legal theory. One of the first to formulate a complete system of transmission-criticism for the linguistic sciences was al-Anbārī (d. 916). His Luma' al-addīlah fī usūl al-naḥw is a monument to the influence of traditionism in Arabic philology. This influence undoubtedly goes back to earliest times, as the first philologists, including al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad (d. 791), were schooled in tradition. The lexicographers eventually earned themselves the reputation of traditionists (muhaddithūn) of language.¹ Like other traditionists, their function was to report, to transmit data. This data could be worked upon by others; the jurist (faqīh) worked upon the data supplied by

¹Al-Suyūṭī, al-Muḥḥir, I, p. 59.

the traditionist by applying analogy (qiyās) to it; the grammarian (nahwī) did the same with the data supplied by the lexicographer.

Al-Anbārī, who flourished at the end of the same century which had seen the rise of hadīth-criticism and the compilation of the two great canonical books of tradition, those of al-Bukhārī (d. 870) and Muslim (d. 875), simply recapitulates without any serious modification the theory of transmission-criticism as it had been developed by traditionists. Three factors must be considered in connection with any given transmission: the number of transmission-lines (isnād), the completeness of any given line, and the trustworthiness of the transmitters. In respect to the first, transmission is divided into two types: the multilineal transmission (tawātur) and the unilineal transmission (ʾahād).¹ The multilineal transmission includes a number of transmission-lines sufficiently distributed that no collusion can be deemed possible. The unilineal transmission, on the other hand, is based on a single transmission-line. Al-Anbārī affirms that the unilineal transmission produces only probable knowledge (ẓann). In respect to the second factor, transmission is divided into complete

¹Al-Anbārī, Lumaʿ al-adillah, pp. 32-36.

and incomplete.¹ The incomplete transmission (mursal) is such that the identity of at least one of the transmitters is not indicated, and therefore his trustworthiness cannot be determined. Al-Anbārī takes the usual traditionist point of view in rejecting such transmissions. In respect to the trustworthiness of the transmitters,² al-Anbārī stipulates that a transmitter must have a reputation of reliability (ṣadī), whether male or female, free or slave.

With al-Āmidī and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, the question of the knowledge of waḍʿ al-lughah through transmission is introduced into the "linguistic premises" of the science of the principles of jurisprudence. Al-Āmidī, in his brief statement of the matter,³ reflects a point of view very much like that of al-Anbārī. Al-Rāzī,⁴ however, goes much further into the subject and raises some questions over the validity of a simple transference of the categories of ḥadīth-criticism without modification into the linguistic sciences. What evidence, he asks, do we have of a multilinear transmission of

¹al-Anbārī, Lumaʿ al-adillāh, pp. 39-41.

²Ibid., p. 35.

³al-Āmidī, al-Iḥkām, p. 41.

⁴al-Rāzī, al-Mahṣūl, as quoted in al-Suyūṭī, al-Muḥḥir, I, pp. 115-118.

linguistic information occurring in past times? It is not enough that a piece of linguistic information be widely distributed in the present; this distribution must extend into the past. Two avenues of proof for multilinear transmission in the past are closed: (1) In the linguistic sciences it is not customary to report on the trustworthiness of the transmitters as far back as the contemporaries of the Prophet. When one learns a certain word from a person, one is not told by that person that this word was "heard" from a recognized transmitter. The furthest one goes in authenticating a word is to trace it to a recognized lexicon, or some accomplished teacher. Al-Rāzī seems to share the opinion of Ibn Fāris¹ that language is to a large extent handed down from one person to another as a spontaneous activity quite independent of the role of transmitters; the supreme instance of this activity is the process by which a child learns words from his elders. (2) Moreover, there is no purpose for multilinear transmission in language. In respect to certain weighty matters of law and religion, multilinear transmission serves the purpose of guarding against fabrication; but in matters of language there is no motive (dā'i) for fabrication. In short,

¹Ibn Fāris, al-Ṣāhibī, p. 30.

al-Rāzī is aware that transmission, in the case of language, is not as formal and regularized as in the case of religious tradition. He does not exclude the category of multilinear transmission from the domain of language, but insists that it must be understood in a somewhat different sense. The criterion for multilinear transmission in language is more subjective than in the science of tradition. An expression whose meaning has been transmitted in multilinear fashion is simply an expression whose meaning is in fact doubted by no one. For example, whoever would doubt that "earth" means earth, and "sky" means sky would be rebuked by those around him. Such doubt would be taken as sheer audacity. This certainty (jazm) we have respecting such expressions is proof enough that they have been transmitted in multilinear fashion, apart from the formal apparatus of a chain of transmitters. Other expressions, however, are admittedly uncommon and their meanings stragge; with respect to such words we have a sense of uncertainty, on account of which we may correctly attribute to them a unilineal transmission. Thus "unilineally transmitted" is equivalent to the well-known lexicographical category of gharīb (rare). Conversely, that which is not gharīb is the product of multilinear transmission. Al-Rāzī, in support of his subjective interpretation of the types of trans-

mission, states that the legal theorists and philologists have never really concerned themselves with transmission-criticism, as is evidenced from the fact that many of the early philological books, e.g. those of al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad and Sibawayhi, contain errors.

This "adaptation" of the categories of multilinear and unilinear transmission by al-Rāzī to the linguistic sciences, though accepted by many later legal theorists, is not at all satisfactory to the great polyhistor al-Suyūṭī, who returns to the more formalistic point of view of al-Anbarī. Philologists, he maintains, have given attention to transmission criticism, and have composed ṭabaqāt books for the purpose, whereby the great names of the linguistic sciences can be identified and their value as transmitters determined.¹ Moreover, al-Suyūṭī devotes a long chapter of the Muzhir² to illustrations of the occurrence of the formulas of transmission in the philological books. His approach to language is that of a thorough-going traditionalist, and he employs many of the categories of ḥadīth-criticism, e.g. ṣaḥīḥ, fāsid, mursal, etc.

¹al-Suyūṭī, al-Muzhir, I, p. 120.

²Ibid., pp. 144-170.

A similar approach is followed by certain legal theorists as well. Al-Zarkashī (d. 1344),¹ for example, lays down five conditions for the obligatory acceptance of a word:

(1) It must be proven by a strong chain of transmitters to be from the Arabs; (2) the trustworthiness of the transmitters must be established; (3) the word must be transmitted from someone who is considered to be a great authority (ḥujjah) in matters of language; (4) the transmitter must actually hear the word from the one from whom he transmits it; (5) those who transmit it from him must then also hear the word from him.

Whatever be the exact interpretation of the categories of transmission as applied to language, the fact remains that throughout the literature of legal theory transmission has a firm place within the "linguistic premises" as the basis for the knowledge of the "givens" of language. Of the two types of knowledge in the Muslim epistemology, i.e. knowledge based on report and knowledge acquired through reason, the knowledge of wadʿ al-lughah, i.e. of the al-mawḍūʿāt al-lughawiyah, belongs unequivocally to the former.

Accordingly, analogy (qiyās) is refused by most of the

¹Badr al-Dīn al-Zarkashī, al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ, as quoted in al-Suyūṭī, al-Muzḥir, I, pp. 58-59.

later legal theorists a role in the science of language, i.e. lexicography. There is detectable in this refusal an unwillingness to give to analogy a status comparable to that which it occupies in law, i.e. the status of a source. The other sources of law find a place of sorts in lexicography. The Koran from earliest times was an authority in language. The Sunnah, though ignored by the early philologists, eventually came to be recognized as a second authority, probably as a result of the codification of the Sunnah in the ninth century. Ibn Malik makes free use of the Sunnah as shawāhid (authoritative examples).¹ As an equivalent of ijmāʿ (consensus) we find the kalām al-ʿarab (speech of the Arabs). Unlike the ijmāʿ of law, which extends through the first three centuries of Islam, the kalām al-ʿarab reaches back into the pre-Islamic period, and the poetry of that period is considered its truest expression. The lexicographers drew chiefly on the pre-Islamic poets, though many of them also consulted with contemporary beduins. The resemblance between kalām al-ʿarab and ijmāʿ can be seen in al-Shāfiʿī's emphasis on the kalām al-ʿarab as the possession of the whole community.² Though

¹Goldziher, Muhammadanische Studien, II, p. 239.

²al-Shāfiʿī, al-Risālah, p. 42.

essentially a deposite of the past, i.e. of pre-Islamic times, it is carried forth in the minds of Muslims. The vastness (sa'ah) of Arabic is such that it cannot be the possession of a single individual (except one miraculously endowed, as a Prophet); therefore it must be sought in the whole community. This attitude encourages a kind of talab al-'ilm (pious pursuit of knowledge) in language.

With three of the sources of jurisprudence thus present in the linguistic sciences as sources for the knowledge of wad', it was natural that some jurists, e.g. al-Bāqillānī (d. 1013), Abū Ishāq al-Isfarā'īnī (d. 1027), should have sought a place for the fourth source, i.e. analogy. The argument they used was as follows:¹ The word khamr, for example, is derived from mukhāmarah, which means "intoxication." Transmitters report that the word khamr has been established for the fermented juice of the grape. However, through analogy we can go beyond the transmitted information and affirm that khamr has been established also for the fermented juice of the date. The "cause" ('illah) of this analogy is the presence of an intoxicating element in both the fermented juice of the grape and that of the date, rendering both proper sig-

p. 14. ¹al-Āmidī, al-Ihkām, p. 29; al-Shawkānī, Irshād al-fuhūl,

nifications of khamr. That is to say, the cause of fermented grape juice's being called khamr, i.e. the presence of an intoxicating element, is also by analogy the cause of fermented date juice's being called khamr, though the latter acceptance is not substantiated by transmission.

Al-Āmidī, who represents what became the majority opinion, rejects this line of reasoning chiefly on the grounds that it does not present us with anything conclusive.¹ Granted that it is logically possible that the word khamr may have been established for fermented date juice on the basis of a property common (al-waṣf al-jāmiʿ) to it and to fermented grape juice, it is likewise logically possible that it may not have been so established, that it may rather have been established exclusively (khāṣṣatan) for fermented grape juice. This inconclusiveness attaches to all attempts to apply analogy to language; therefore analogy cannot be considered a proper source of language. The only avenue to waḍʿ al-lughah is transmission (naql); the only authority in language is what is transmitted from Koran, Sunnah, and kalām al-ʿarab. Moreover, there is no real likeness between the analogy of jurisprudence and the analogy which some try to apply to lan-

¹Al-Āmidī, al-Ihkām, pp. 29-30

guage, since the analogy of jurisprudence is in reality grounded in the consensus of the early community, and is thus itself known to us through transmission. There is no positive transmission showing us that in matters of language the early community, particularly the earliest lexicographers, used analogy; therefore in the later lexicography analogy is an independent enterprise, divorced from a larger consensus, which smacks of innovation.

The emphasis on transmission as the sole basis for the knowledge of waq^c al-lughah thus explicates more fully the idea of the givenness of language. This givenness is not the givenness of logical or formal truth posited by the intellect, nor is it the givenness of phenomena directly experienced; in the spheres of logical truth and direct experience, givenness is immediate. Islam is concerned, not with the immediately given, but with that which is given mediately, i.e. through the medium of transmission. Language, like law, belongs to the order of the mediately given. Waq^c al-lughah, like the Sunnah itself, depends on transmission as a vehicle through which to be communicated through time.

Having thus shown how the knowledge of the givens of language is acquired, the legal theorists are prepared to deal directly with the givens themselves. Again, as with

Abū al-Ḥusayn, the notion of what-is-established in language (al-mawḍūʿāt al-lughawīyah) embraces both the particular and the general facts of language. Both are the concern of the legal theorists. He must know the established meanings of particular expressions (al-dalāʾilāt al-waḍʿīyah)¹ if he is to ascertain the meaning of texts. The established meaning of the expressions in a text, taken at face value, constitute the literal sense (ẓāhir). The literal sense is the starting point of legal interpretation. Of the two principle types of signification with which the scholastic legal theory is concerned, i.e. explicit signification (dalāʾilāt al-mantūq) and implicit signification (dalāʾilāt al-mafhūm),¹ the former is the more fundamental; and the first step in determining an explicit signification is the ascertainment of the literal sense. However, since the literal sense does not always yield a precise meaning, the legal theorists must go beyond the particular facts of language, i.e. the established meanings of particular expressions, to the general facts, i.e. established semantic features that characterize categories of expressions (homonymity, synonymity, generality, idiom, metaphor). These features are responsible for ambiguity in the literal

¹Muḥammad Adīb Ṣāliḥ, Tafsīr al-nuṣūṣ, pp. 437ff.

sense, i.e. for ijmāl, which must be resolved by the legal theorist in accordance with rules provided by stylistics (ʿilm al-bayān). It should be emphasized that these features are established; they are not accidents of language, but givens of language, designed to have a definite function in language. The bulk of the "linguistic premises" is devoted to demonstrating that these features are established. Only by doing so do the legal theorists consider themselves justified in going beyond the ambiguous literal sense of texts to a more precise sense ascertained by stylistic rules. Unlike the Zāhirites, the Sunnites disassociate clarity of meaning (bayān) from literal sense (zāhir); the clear meaning of a text is that meaning which is grasped from the expressions used in accordance with stylistic rules. In certain instances, a literal sense may be free of ambiguity, i.e. may be clear, in which case interpretative measures such as delimitation (takhsīṣ) and explication (ta'wīl) are unnecessary. In the majority of cases, however, these measures are necessary; and the use of them is justified by features established in language.

In the remaining portion of this section, we will see how the scholastic legal theorists argue that the principle features of language upon which their hermeneutics is based are among those things established in language, i.e. are givens of language.

Metaphor¹

The givenness of metaphor is denied by only one Sunnite jurist, namely Abū Ishāq al-Isfarā'īnī (d. 1027), who rejects not the fact that an expression such as "lion" can in certain instances mean "courageous man" but that this usage of lion differs in principle from any other usage of the expression. In other words, he assimilates metaphor to non-metaphor (ba-gīgah), thereby abolishing the category of metaphor altogether. The criticism of this point of view has already been indicated (see above, pp.51-52).

Most legal theorists are at pains to show the givenness of metaphor in language. This proves a somewhat difficult task for the chief reason, mentioned previously in connection with the Mu'tazilites, that the givenness of metaphor cannot be expressed by means of the term waq', since this term in the standard definition of metaphor has a special connection with the non-metaphor. A metaphor on this definition is an expression which is used (ustu'mil) in a meaning other than the meaning for which it has been established (wuḍi'a). The terms isti'māl and waq' are placed in opposi-

¹al-Āmidī, al-Ihkām, pp. 23-24; al-Bihārī, Musallam al-thubūt, I, pp. 154-155; al-Subkī, Jam' al-jawāmi', I, p. 402; al-Shawkānī, Irshād al-fuḥūl, pp. 20-21.

tion to each other; the latter has the connotation of what is the essence of language, the former the connotation of what is a departure from the true essence. Metaphor thus takes on the appearance of a manipulation of language freely and arbitrarily practiced by anyone having a fancy for it. This state of affairs is obviously intolerable to anyone accepting the existence of metaphor in the Koran, as the Sunnite legal theorists do; such arbitrariness attributed to the sacred texts of law would make for complete hermeneutical chaos. Consequently, legal theorists are committed to the view that metaphor is part of the fabric of language; and if they cannot affirm the givenness of metaphor by means of the term waḍḥ they must do so in some other way.

One way is to show that usage (istiḥḥāl), upon which metaphor is based, is, like waḍḥ itself, transmitted from the Arabs.¹ This takes from usage the stigma of arbitrariness; one may "use" expressions as metaphors only in a manner conforming to the usage of the Arabs. There is thus in "usage" a givenness, a "sunṭah," which though distinguishable from the givenness of waḍḥ is nonetheless givenness in the true sense of the word. Such is the givenness of metaphor. There

¹al-ʿAmīdī, al-Ihkām, pp. 26-27.

are two views as to the way in which the principle of transmission is to be applied to metaphorical usage. (1) According to one, which is the stricter view, each metaphor must be transmitted together with its metaphorical meaning from the Arabs. The argument is: how do we know that "lion" signifies in certain instances "courageous man" if we are not informed through a chain of transmitters of this signification? It is unthinkable, on this view, that such a signification is known immediately from the context itself, or inferred from a connection (‘alāqah) between the proper meaning and the metaphorical meaning. If metaphor were based solely on connections between meanings and not on transmission, there would be nothing to prevent us from supposing that "palm tree" may be used metaphorically for a tall animal, not just a tall man, as is usually the case; since in the case of tall animal a connection can be established with the palm tree in terms of the common attribute of tallness. Without transmission, there is no limit to metaphor; and metaphor unchecked leads to confusion. Transmission is thus a necessary limiting factor.

(2) The other view, which is somewhat less exacting than the foregoing view, is that it is the manner, or style, of metaphorical usage which must be transmitted from the Arabs, not each actual metaphor. If it can be established that the Arabs

did use metaphor and be shown in what manner they did so, this is sufficient for establishing the givenness of metaphor in language. The arbitrariness is lessened by the fact that metaphorical usage must be subjected to the rules derived from the usage of the Arabs, rules that stipulate the types of connection on which metaphor may be based.

The other way of affirming the givenness of metaphor is to employ the cognate of wad^c, i.e. muwāḍa^cah,¹ as was done by the Mu^ctazilites. This makes possible the retention of wad^c as a term associated with the non-metaphor, without undermining the givenness of metaphor.

The idea of the establishment (muwāḍa^cah) of metaphor is in many respects a close correlate of the idea of the transmission (naql) of metaphorical usage. What is transmitted must have been established at some point in the past. Thus the two ways of affirming the givenness of metaphor, i.e. through the principle of transmission and through the usage of the term muwāḍa^cah, supplement each other, though within the "linguistic premises" they are not mentioned conjointly.

The impact of the term muwāḍa^cah as a designation for the givenness of metaphor is seen in the later development,

¹al-Āmidī, al-Ihkām, p. 15.

in the treatises in the "science of waq'," of the category of "indirect" waq',¹ (al-waq' al-ta'wili) which is a direct carry-over of muwāḍa'ah. With this new category, the givenness of metaphor finds its ultimate expression.

Legal Idiom²

Legal idiom is considered to be one of the sources of ambiguity with which hermeneutics must deal.³ Certain expressions, primarily Koranic, e.g. ṣalāh, ṣawm, were recognized to have meanings in the context of law which they do not have in ordinary language. The problem was whether in particular cases to interpret such expressions in accordance with their "linguistic" or their "legal" meanings.

ta'wili literally means "explicative"; however, in English "explicative" does not serve well as a description of "establishment"; "indirect" is more suitable. A metaphor is established indirectly for its meaning, i.e. is appointed to signify a meaning by means of a context (bi-al-ḡarīnah). Consequently, a metaphor requires explication. A non-metaphor, on the other hand, is established directly for a meaning, i.e. is appointed to signify a meaning through itself (bi naf'ihī). See ʿIṣām al-Dīn al-Isfarāʾīnī, Sharḥ al-risālah al-waqʿīyah, fol. 6a.

²Abū al-Ḥusayn, al-Muʿtamad, pp. 23-26; al-ʿAmīdī, al-Iḥkām, pp. 18-23; al-Bihārī, Musallam al-thubūt, I, pp. 164-165; Ibn al-Ḥājib, Mukhtaṣar al-Muntahā, pp. 22-23; al-Shawkānī, Irshād al-fuḥūl, pp. 19-20.

³Muḥammad Adīb Ṣalīb, Tafsīr al-nuṣūṣ, p. 231.

The possibility of technical vocabularies had been recognized by philologists. When an artisan creates tools for his profession, he must give these tools names; these names constitute a vocabulary peculiar to him and his co-workers, a vocabulary quite distinct from the language proper.¹ To this extent a certain evolution is granted in the formation of expressions, resulting not in a modification of language as such, but in a proliferation of technical vocabularies. "The language" handed down from the past remains untouched by this evolution. Technical vocabularies are said to arise out of a special wad^c in which a group of artisans or specialists participate. This type of wad^c is described as wad^c 'urfi, as distinct from wad^c lughawi. It is the latter exclusively which forms the basis of language per se and which is authoritative for the whole community. Wad^c 'urfi is authoritative only in the domain in which it is operative.

With respect to the legal idioms, the question which imposes itself on the legal theorists is whether to interpret them as metaphors arising out of "the language" or as technical terms forming a special vocabulary distinct from "the language." In more precise terms, the question is whether

¹Ibn Jinnī, al-Khaṣā'is, I, p. 45.

to take as the basis of the legal idiom al-waḍʿ al-lughawī or al-waḍʿ al-sharʿī (a special legal waḍʿ).

Advocates of the first alternative were al-Bāqillānī, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, and al-Bayḍāwī. They argued that to posit a special vocabulary peculiar to the Koran and distinct from "the language" would violate the maxim, found in the Koran itself, that the Koran is an Arabic Koran. It was this maxim which made the givenness of language a fundamental premise of all religious sciences. The Koran was considered to be revealed in the language of the Arabs, i.e. in a language whose givenness was a pre-established fact. The notion of a technical vocabulary in the Koran implied a non-Arabic, or more exactly "post-Arabic," element (indeed a very important element, since words in this vocabulary were pivotal in the religious life of Muslims), the givenness of which could not be considered a pre-established fact. The givenness of such a vocabulary would be concurrent with the revelation itself, and would require that the establishment (waḍʿ) of the vocabulary be made known by some process of transmission to those to whom the revelation was addressed. However, there is no indication of any such transmission. Therefore the legal idiom of the Koran, rather than constituting a special vocabulary, must be part of the pre-established language of

the Arabs. Any peculiarity of meaning in these idioms can be accounted for in terms of metaphor. Thus salāh, the lexicographers tell us, means "call" (du'ā) in "the language." In the Koran, it is given a more particularized meaning, i.e. a particular type of call subject to certain regulations and legal evaluation (wuḡūb). This particularization of meaning does not obliterate the original meaning which the word has in the language. Thus salāh is given a basis in "the language"; the proper meaning of the word is found in "the language" and the metaphorical usage to which it is subjected in the Koran conforms to the rules of metaphor given in language.

Those who argued for the existence of a special technical vocabulary in the Koran based on al-waḡḡ al-sharḡ took the following line of reasoning: At least some of the legal idioms of the Koran, so they pointed out, have lost their original meaning entirely. Thus salāh does not mean "call" since a mute is capable of performing salāh. Moreover, in the case of true metaphor, the metaphorical meaning occurs in the mind of the hearer subsequently to the occurrence of the original meaning, so that the connection between the two meanings may be grasped. This subordination of meaning to meaning does not, however, occur in the usage of legal idioms.

When the word sawm is uttered, one does not first grasp the meaning "abstention" and then subsequently the meaning "fast"; rather one grasps the latter meaning immediately (tabādurān). Furthermore, the communication of the meanings of legal idioms does not necessarily require a special process of transmission, such as that by which the knowledge of "the language" is communicated. Legal meanings can be known from contexts and from the practice of the community. As regards the maxim that the Koran is an Arabic Koran, this can be true in spite of the presence of non-Arabic elements in it. (Foreign words in this connection are considered conjointly with legal terms.) The term "Qur'ān" can refer to either the part (i.e. a verse, a surah, or the Arabic element), or the whole, depending on the context.

The case for the presence of a technical vocabulary in the Koran was first advanced by the Mu'tazilites, and despite the opposition of men like al-Bāqillānī it ultimately carried the day. The later books of legal theory accept it without fear that the givenness of language is thereby undermined. The idea of the givenness of language thus takes on a somewhat broader application. The givenness of "the language" remains fundamental; but against the background of this givenness, the givenness of the technical legal vocabulary as a

separate phenomenon independent of the givenness of "the language" proper is also admitted.

Generality, Homonymity, Synonymity

Of these three features of language, generality (ʿumūm) is the one the givenness of which is least disputed. Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī¹ records that the Murjīʿites, a sect of early Islamic times, denied the existence of general terms in language. The expressions usually taken as general, i.e. the so-called alfāz al-ʿumūm, were in their opinion particular (khāṣṣ). We may suppose that the Murjīʿites were reacting against the legal hermeneutics of al-Shāfiʿī, in which generality is one of the leading principles; however, we have no direct evidence that this was so. In any case, the opinion of the Murjīʿites appears to have soon disappeared, as there is no mention of it in the books of the scholastic legal theorists. With al-Shāfiʿī, generality becomes an accepted fact of language and a cardinal premise of Muslim hermeneutics. Generality as such is never an issue in Muslim legal theory, though there is disagreement as to the evaluation (hukm) of general terms, i.e. whether they are binding or not.

¹Abū al-Ḥusayn, al-Muʿtamad, p. 209.

Homonymity and synonymity,¹ on the other hand, are very much disputed, and a great deal of attention is directed in the "linguistic premises" to showing that they are among the established givens of language. The usual definition of the homonym is: an expression established for a plurality of meanings by a plurality of establishments (awḡḡ). The last part of the definition sets the homonym off from the general expression, which is established for a plurality of meanings by a single establishment. A homonym is, in effect, a group of expressions in disguise. The same expression is established for one meaning, and then, quite apart from that establishment, for another meaning. Each establishment (waḡḡ) is a separate fact of language, a separate given. Thus 'ayn means both "spring" and "eye", and each signification is independent of the other; it is as though 'ayn is in reality two words, the vocal similarity between them being coincidental. A synonym, by contrast, is an expression established for a meaning for which another expression is also established. The same meaning is subject to two or more establishments.

¹al-Āmidī, al-Iḥkām, pp. 10-13; Ibn al-Ḥājjib, Mukhtaṣar al-Muntahā, pp. 17-19; al-Bihārī, Musallam al-thubūt, pp. 135-138, 189-190; al-Shawkānī, Irshād al-fuḥūl, pp. 16-18; al-Subkī, Jam' al-jawāmi', pp. 379-384.

The objections to homonymity and synonymity proceed from the contention that they serve no useful purpose; and what is established (wuḍiʿa) in language must have a purpose. Indeed, homonymity and synonymity only contribute to confusion, making of language a heavy burden that it ought not to be. If an expression has two meanings, then the intelligibility of language is diminished; one never knows which meaning is meant. If two expressions have the same meaning, language then becomes an unnecessarily toilsome affair; each person must learn both expressions, lest some learn one and some the other, blocking communication completely. Underlying these objections is a firm conviction in the rationality of language, and indeed in the rationality of all that is established. Wadʿ al-lughah precludes the fortuitous and accidental. Language is the product of conscious deliberation. It is brought into being for the sole purpose of communication; whatever does not serve this purpose, whatever makes for unintelligibility or unnecessary effort is to be denied. The ideal (asl) of language is a plurality of words for a plurality of ideas, each word being uniquely appointed for an idea. Since homonymity and synonymity do not conform to this ideal, their givenness is denied. Accordingly, homonymity is explained away by some philologists in terms of a

"transcendental unity of concept"¹ underlying all the apparently diverse meanings of a particular expression; synonymity is disposed of in those efforts, of which al-Tha'libi's (d. 1038) fiqh al-lughah (Wisdom of Language) is a chief example, to single out the nuances of expressions which render all expressions unique in their signification.

The defenders of homonymity and synonymity are obliged to demonstrate the rationality of these features, since the rationality of language is a dogma to which they no less than their adversaries are committed. Their case is built on the premise that the purpose of language includes more than mere communication. Esthetic effect is an equally valid end to be achieved, and synonymity facilitates the realization of this end by supplying the poet with numerous expressions for a given idea, the choice of which is determined by considerations of rhyme and meter. Moreover, ambiguity can serve a useful purpose, rendering homonymity appropriate on certain occasions. The Prophet himself was on one occasion saved by an ambiguity. When he and Abu Bakr were fleeing from Mecca, the two men were accosted and Abu Bakr was asked, "Who is this with you?" Abu Bakr replied, "This is my guide." The

¹Massignon, "Reflexions sur la structure primitive de l'analyse grammaticale en arabe," Arabica, I, fasc. 1, p. 10.

reply was both appropriate and truthful.

To sum up: The real basis for the Islamic idea of the givenness of language was provided, not by the theories of the origin of language which were advanced in the tenth century, but by the system of legal thought which was being developed about the same time by the Mu'tazilites on the model established by al-Shafi'i, and which was eventually formalized by the Muslim scholastics. This basis was a pragmatic, not a theoretical, one. Every system of thought must begin somewhere, and a system which is based on a *textus receptus* must necessarily begin with language. If the system is to be intact and stable, so must be the language upon which it in the final analysis rests. A house built upon sand will not endure. Language must be above the shifting sands of human affairs; it must be a given, an absolute, a fixed and reliable point of reference.

In the "linguistic premises" of the science of the principles of jurisprudence, the term wad' became the standard expression for the idea of the givenness of language as a starting point of legal thought. Before it can be determined what is established in the realm of law through the sacred texts, it must be determined what is established in the realm of language. In Islam, the "given" is always un-

derstood as the "established". The "linguistic premises" are concerned mainly with those features of language whose establishment was controverted. The majority of the scholastics, taking the philological point of view of the Mu'tazilites before them, argued that all the features in question are "established." In so doing they reinforced the idea of the givenness of language.

The "Science of Wad^c"

In the "science of wad^c" the idea of the givenness of language reaches its fullest expression. The emphasis shifts from the givenness of certain features of language to the givenness of language in its totality. The "linguistic premises" were concerned only with those givens which had a bearing on the interpretation of texts. The idea of the givenness of language was explored, not for its own sake, but as a necessary preliminary to legal theory. That language in its totality is established was presupposed by the legal theorists. The principle that only what is established in language has relevance to legal interpretation presupposes that language as a whole is established.

The "science of wad^c" explores this presupposition. It attempts to show how all the elements in language have been established, and thereby works out systematically the idea of the givenness of language in its totality. By "element" we mean any unit of signification, any expression (lafz) in the general sense, including not only words, but also formal elements, i.e. forms of words, suffixes, etc.

In modern semantics the theory that most nearly cor-

responds to the Muslim semantic outlook is the theory of the name-relation.¹ In this theory, meaning is conceived in terms of simple "standing for." The meaning of an expression is that for which the expression stands, that for which the expression is a name. Muslims carry this theory to extreme: every expression is a name for something, even expressions that in modern linguistics would be called "pure markers," i.e. expressions indicating relations between words but having no meaning in themselves, e.g. conjunctions. Thus the process by which language is "established" (wudi'a) is conceived as a name-giving process. Unlike the modern theory of the name-relation, however, which sees expressions as the names of objects in the world, the Muslim view sees expressions as names of ideas in the mind. The process by which language is established is a process of establishing names for pre-existent ideas.²

¹See Rudolph Carnap, Meaning and Necessity (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), pp. 96-100.

²The ideas for which expressions are established as names are called by different terms: ma na, maḍlul, mafhum. In each case an idea, not an object in the external world, is meant. Thus al-Jurjani defines ma na as: al-suwar al-dhihniyah min haythu annahu wudi'a bi-iza lha al-alfaz. See Ali ibn Muhammad al-Jurjani, Kitab al-Ta'rifat (Cairo: al-Matba'ah al-Hamidiyah, 1903), p. 150. In Muslim semantic thought, the opposition is always between lafz and ma na.

The name-relation lies at the heart of the notion of the givenness of language. The "elements" which make up language stand in a fixed, ordained relation to those ideas of which they are names. The explication of the givenness of language consists in elucidating the process whereby the name-relation is established. This is what the "science of wadʿ" does.

This science is said to have grown directly out of the science of the principles of jurisprudence.¹ The first to deal with the subject of wadʿ for its own sake, outside the context of legal theory, was the great scholastic theologian ʿAḥmad al-Dīn al-ʿIjī (d. 1355). His efforts, however, did not give rise immediately to a separate science. The short treatise which he wrote (al-Risālah al-wadʿiyyah) only suggested topics that were to be dealt with fully and systematically later. Even as late as the early sixteenth century, Tashkōprūzade (d. 1561) states that the "science of wadʿ" had not yet become a written (mudawwan) science and that the treatise of al-ʿIjī was but a drop in the ocean of that science.²

It appears that the "science of wadʿ" did not gain

¹Anon., Risālah fī al-wadʿ, Yehuda MS 4275, fol. 70b; Maḥmūd Shihabī, Dū Risālah, p. b.

²Aḥmad Tashkōprūzade, Miftāḥ al-Saʿādah, I, p. 110.

the status of a recognized written science until the eighteenth century. The first treatises on waqʿ, independent of the commentary literature on al-Ijī's Risālah, appear at that time. These treatises, which are of the nature of manuals, present a body of knowledge far more comprehensive and systematic than that represented by the treatise of al-Ijī. Some of them will be dealt with later.

In elucidating the process whereby the name-relation, i.e. the relation between the "elements" of language and their meanings, is established, the authors of the waqʿ treatises make use of "categories" (aqṣām) of waqʿ. The application of these categories to the "elements" of language constitutes an exhaustive account of the establishment of language in its totality and the final Muslim statement of the givenness of language.

The remaining pages of this dissertation will be devoted to an analysis of the "science of waqʿ." This analysis will proceed in two stages. First, we will examine the categories of waqʿ; then, the manner in which these categories are applied to the "elements" of language.

The chief categories of wad fall into three sets:

- (1) al-waḍḍ al-ʿāmm li-mawḍūʿ lahu ʿāmm
 al-waḍḍ al-ʿāmm li-mawḍūʿ lahu khāṣṣ
 al-waḍḍ al-khāṣṣ li-mawḍūʿ lahu khāṣṣ
- (2) al-waḍḍ al-shakhsī
 al-waḍḍ al-nawʿī
- (3) al-waḍḍ al-tahqīqī
 al-waḍḍ al-taʿwīlī

The first set may be translated as follows:

General establishment for a general object of establishment
 (i.e. meaning)
 General establishment for a particular object of establishment
 Particular establishment for a particular object of establishment

Since these translations involve rather lengthy phrases that do not lend themselves to repetition, we will refer to these categories by means of abbreviations of the Arabic phrases: A-A, A-Kh, Kh-Kh. As these categories are the most difficult to comprehend, more space will be given to explaining them than to the other sets of categories.

The second set will be rendered:

"Isolative" waḍḍ
 "Subsumptive" waḍḍ

The third set, which may be rendered as "direct" waḍḍ and "indirect" waḍḍ (see above, p. 79), is less common in the literature of waḍḍ, and we will have few occasions to refer to

the categories of this set.

* * * * *

The categories A-A, A-Kh, and Kh-Kh were first delineated by 'Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Jurjānī (d. 1413) in his commentaries¹ on the treatise of al-Ījī. The groundwork for these categories was laid by al-Ījī himself, whose treatise² is concerned primarily with the category A-Kh. Once this category had been introduced, it was a natural step to the formation of the others.

The category A-Kh was developed by al-Ījī as a means of demonstrating that certain expressions (alfāz), i.e. personal pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, relative pronouns, and particles, are to be counted as particulars (juz'īyāt), rather than as universals (kullīyāt), as was the habit of the "ancients".³ Such expressions, he feels, are particulars because they are established for particular ideas, although

¹'Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Jurjānī, Hāshīyah 'alā matn al-Risālah al-waḍ'īyah, fol. 3a; Sharḥ 'alā al-Risālah al-waḍ'īyah, fol. 115a.

²al-Ījī, al-Risālah al-waḍ'īyah, in Majmūc al-mutūn, pp. 33-35.

³i.e. the pre-Ghazzalian, pre-scholastic jurist-theologians whose chief representative was al-Bāqillānī. On the difference between "ancients" and "moderns" see Muḥsin Maḥdī, Ibn Khaldūn's Philosophy of History, pp. 31-33.

they differ from other particulars in that they are established for these ideas, not directly, but through the medium of universal ideas.

The meaning of these statements will be explained after we have first dealt with a preliminary question: the propriety of applying the universal-particular distinction to expressions. In logic, this distinction is said to be primarily applicable to ideas, or concepts: a concept (sūrah) is universal if it is "true of many," particular if it is not "true of many."¹ Expressions are said to be universal or particular in a derivative sense (bi al-ʿaraḍ), but in logic the only expressions to which these qualifications are attached are common nouns and proper names. One never comes across instances, in logic, of the application of the universal-particular distinction to personal, demonstrative, relative pronouns, or particles.

In the "science of waḍʿ" the universal-particular distinction is applied to all types of expressions. The justification for this is not expressly stated, but it may be easily surmised. All expressions have meanings. If an expression may be called universal or particular by virtue of the meaning which it has, the all expressions may be called universal

¹Qutb al-Dīn al-Rāzī, Sharḥ al-Risālah al-shamsīyah, pp. 44ff.

or particular. A personal pronoun, for example, has a meaning; that meaning is either universal or particular; therefore the personal pronoun is either universal or particular.

The expressions whose particularity al-Ijī is concerned to establish fall into two classes: (1) particles form a class of their own; (2) personal, demonstrative, and relative pronouns form another class; the designation for this class is maʿrifah (definite), and in addition to these three types of expressions, proper names also belong to this class.

In presenting al-Ijī's exposition of the category of A-Kh, we will first show how he uses this category to demonstrate the particularity of the maʿrifāt (other than proper names), and then how he uses it to demonstrate the particularity of particles.

Before we move directly into the subject of the particularity of the maʿrifāt, a few general remarks concerning the maʿrifāt and their place in Arabic philology will be in order. In both grammar and rhetoric one finds the principle asserted that the subject of a sentence is properly a maʿrifah.¹ The term maʿrifah, which literally means "knowledge," is used in philology to designate an expression which refers to some-

¹al-Taftāzānī, al-Muṭawwal ʿalā al-Talkhīṣ, p. 54; Ibn ʿAqīl, Sharḥ ʿalā al-alfīyah, I, p. 187.

thing known. More exactly, it is an expression by which a speaker refers demonstratively (ishāratan) to something known to himself and to the one to whom he is speaking, i.e. the hearer. Obviously only what is known to both can be referred to demonstratively. Thus when I say to someone "Zayd has arrived," I am referring demonstratively, i.e. "pointing" by means of an expression, to a particular person known to myself and the one to whom I am speaking. The same is true if I say "he has arrived," or "the guest has arrived," or "(he) who, i.e. alladhī, is to speak has arrived," or "that (one) has arrived," or "Zayd's servant (ghulām Zayd) has arrived." The maʿrifāt thus number six in all: proper name, personal pronoun, demonstrative pronoun, relative pronoun, definite noun, first member of a construct phrase (provided the second member is a maʿrifah). Since the last two involve constructions, al-ʾijā does not deal with them.

The reason why the subject of a sentence is properly a maʿrifah is as follows. The subject is that part of the sentence which refers demonstratively to something with which the speaker and hearer are both familiar. It is customary when making a statement first to identify that which the statement is about. The maʿrifāt are the demonstrative devices which make this possible. Once the identification is made,

the speaker gets on with his statement, i.e. attaches a predicate to the subject.

In rhetorical writings one senses a close affinity between the idea of the ma'rifah and that of the particular. One of the tenets for which the orthodox contended in their battle with the philosophers was the divine knowledge of particulars.¹ The knowledge of particulars was considered to be the highest knowledge, i.e. knowledge in the truest sense of the word. Hence statements about particulars were the most truly informative. "Zayd is a scribe" is more informative than "everything exists." The degree of information increases with the delimitation (takhsis) of the subject.² This delimitation necessarily ends with particulars. Since particulars are what is known in the truest sense of the word, they are also the most susceptible to demonstrative reference. Hence the ma'rifah may be defined as an expression which typically (though not always) refers demonstratively to a particular.

With respect to the foregoing there was general agreement in al-Ijī's time. What was not agreed upon was the use of the terms "universal" and "particular" as characterizations

¹al-Ghazzālī, Tahāfut al-falāsifah, pp. 192ff.

²al-Taftāzānī, al-Muṭawwal ʿala al-Talkhīs, p. 54.

of the ma'rifāt (or, more exactly, the non-complex ma'rifāt). Al-Ījī chose to call all the ma'rifāt particulars; the "ancients" reserved this designation for the proper name and called the rest universals.¹

Why did the "ancients" call the ma'rifāt other than the proper name universals when they knew that in actual speech situations a ma'rifah refers demonstratively to a particular? The answer is: they made a distinction between the meaning of a ma'rifah and that to which it refers in actual speech situations. Thus the problem boiled down to the "meaning of meaning" (to lift a phrase out of context): what is the meaning of an expression? It was generally accepted that a meaning is that for which an expression is established (wuḍi'a). The establishment of expressions was understood in a simple, straight-forward manner: the author of language² forms ideas of all the things that make up the world; for these ideas he appoints expressions, so that the ideas become the meanings of the expressions. Thus meanings appear to be located in the mind of the author of language.

¹Abd al-Rahmān Khalaf, Khulāṣat ʿilm al-waḍʿ, p. 5.

²i.e. the wāḍiʿ; this term appears throughout the literature of waḍʿ. Though the identity of the wāḍiʿ (God or man?) is not determined, that language has an author is not doubted.

When this straight-forward way of thinking was applied to ma'rifat (except the proper name), it led to the following formulation: Personal pronouns, relative pronouns, and demonstrative pronouns are established for universal ideas arising in the mind of the author of language. For example, "he" is established for the idea of "a single male person who is absent (ghā'ib) from the speech situation."¹ As such "he" is on a par with "man." Both signify an idea under which an indefinite number of particulars is subsumed. There is no difference in kind between "single male person absent from the speech situation" and "rational animal." Both ideas are abstract, comprehensive, universal; hence both "he" and "man" are universals.

The rationale for this straight-forward approach was: The meaning of an expression is that for which the author of language has established the expression. In the case of expressions like "he," it is impossible that the author of language should be able to take into account, i.e. form an idea of, all those things to which the expressions refer in count-

¹Note the absence of strictly grammatical terminology in our translation, i.e. singular, masculine gender, third person. Grammatical terminology has reference to the properties of expressions, whereas we are here concerned with the properties of things of which we form ideas.

less speech situations. To do so he would himself have to be present at every speech situation, and this is obviously unthinkable since expressions are established prior to speech situations. Therefore rather than establishing an expression for all those countless particulars to which the expression will refer in all future speech situations, the author of language establishes it for a general idea embracing all those particulars. This idea, being that for which the expression is established, is then its true meaning. "Meaning" in this context has a strong resemblance to lexical definition. If one were to look up the "meaning" of "he" in a lexicon, one would certainly not expect to find an exhaustive list of all those particulars which "he" has referred to or can refer to; rather one would expect to find some sort of abstraction.

Though this view meant that the meanings of expressions like "he" were to be located outside actual speech situations, the "ancients" made an effort to link the expressions with speech situations by devising the following formula: The expressions are established for general ideas on condition that in actual speech situations they be used for particulars subsumed under those ideas.¹

¹al-Shubrāwī, al-Minhaj al-ilāhiyah, pp. 8-9.

As for the question whether expressions like "he" should be characterized as "universal" or "particular", the logical conclusion of this view was that since these terms applied to expressions only with reference to their meanings, and since a meaning is that for which an expression is established, such expressions were properly to be considered as universals.

In order to appreciate this line of thinking, we must keep in mind the underlying concern to affirm the givenness of language in its entirety. Every expression, every "element", is established, ordained, appointed for some meaning. To exclude a part of language (e.g. the ma'rifāt) from this establishment would be to deprive that part of its givenness. The "ancients" in maintaining that expressions like "he" were established for universal ideas were trying to give a basis for the givenness of such words in language.

What was objectionable, for the point of view of al-Ijī, about the view of the "ancients" was that this view did not give an adequate basis for the givenness of the demonstrative character of expressions like "he." The inclusion of a proviso clause in the formula of establishment was not enough. Instead of affirming that expressions like "he" were established for universal ideas on condition that they be used to refer to particulars subsumed under the universal ideas, it

was necessary to affirm that such words were established for particular ideas. Only in this way could the givenness of the ma'rifah qua ma'rifah be affirmed. The "ancients" relied too heavily on pseudo-meanings (ideas in the mind of the author of language) which had little to do with the real meanings which these expressions have in every day usage.

Accordingly, al-Ijī advanced a new theory of the establishment of personal pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, and relative pronouns. (Later we will see that this theory applied also to particles.) Unlike other expressions (for which the old theory was quite adequate), these expressions are not established for ideas arising in the mind of the author of language. Rather their establishment occurs in this manner: The author of language forms an idea. Instead of establishing an expressions for the idea as such, he establishes it for each particular subsumed under the idea. The phrase "each particular" (kull wāhid min al-mushakkhḥaṣāt bi khusūsihi) is crucial. The author of language does not establish the expression for a class, i.e. the class of all those particulars subsumed under the idea. "He" does not signify a class. It signifies a single particular. Consequently it must be stressed that "he" is established for each particular in such a way that when the expression is used one and only one par-

ticular is understood.¹

Abū al-Qāsim al-Samarqandī (d. 1483) elucidates the phrase "each particular" by means of a disjunction. "He" is said to be established for "this particular, or that particular, or that particular, etc." of the particulars falling under the universal idea "single male person absent from the speech situation."²

The identity of the particular for which "he" is used in a given speech situation is of course not known to the author of language, who establishes expressions prior to all speech situations. This means that the identity of the particular to which "he" refers in a given speech situation cannot be known by the hearer from the expression itself. In the case of proper names, i.e. Zayd, this is not the case: the identity of the particular is known from the expression itself. How, then, can we say that the reference of expressions like "he" is a demonstrative reference, since expressions can only refer demonstratively to things the identity of which is known. The answer is that in given speech situations, the identity of particulars referred to by expressions like "he"

¹al-Qūshjī, Sharḥ Calā al-Risālah al-waḍʿiyyah, pp. 41-49.

²al-Samarqandī, Sharḥ Calā al-Risālah al-waḍʿiyyah, fol. 12b

is known. However, it is known, not from the expression itself, but from an identifying context (garīnah muʿayyinah).

The personal pronoun, the demonstrative pronoun, and the relative pronoun each require a special type of identifying context.¹ In the case of the personal pronoun, the identifying context must be within the speech situation (khittāb). For "I" it is the use of the expression by a particular speaker, for "you" the direction of the expression to a particular hearer, for "he" the occurrence of a previous reference to the particular. In the case of the demonstrative pronoun, the identifying context is said to be a physical pointing to a particular; in the case of the relative pronoun, a mental pointing. Physical pointing is clear enough. When I say "This is a book," I am in effect pointing physically to something immediately present.

The notion of mental pointing (ishārah ʿaqliyah) is not quite so clear. In connection with it, al-Ījī in the conclusion (khātimah) of his treatise mentions a problem. The identifying context for "(the one) who" (alladhi) is said to be a phrase (ḡilah) within the same sentence in which "(the one) who" occurs. This phrase is said to constitute

¹al-Qūshjī, Sharḥ ʿalā al-Risālah al-waḍʿiyah, pp. 69-71.

a mental pointing. When I say "(the one) who came from Basrah is a noble man," I am indicating by means of the content of the phrase "came from Basrah" the particular person to whom "(the one) who" refers. The problem which al-Ījī brings up is this: how can I indicate a particular by means of a mental content (maḍmūn) which is quite universal. The content, ie. meaning, of the phrase "came from Basrah" is universal, since many particular persons may be said to have come from Basrah. How can I identify a particular person by means of such a general phrase? The answer given in the commentaries is that while the meaning of the phrase "came from Basrah" is general in itself, it is not general when used in actual speech situations. The speaker assumes that the phrase, though universal in itself, in actuality is subject to circumstantial limitation (al-inḥisār al-khārijī) and that this circumstantial limitation is known to the hearer. On account of this the phrase serves as an identifying context.¹

Concerning personal, demonstrative, and relative pronouns in general, the question arises: how can the author of language establish such an expression for "each particular" subsumed under a universal idea when each particular is not

¹al-Qushjī, Sharḥ al-Āl al-Risālah al-waḍʿiyyah, pp. 76-79.

present before him in such a way that he can take it into account. The answer which the commentaries develop is that each particular is present before him by virtue of the universal idea under which it is subsumed. A particular "exists" within a universal in the manner of fanā', a term reminiscent of mystic absorption. The particular loses its identity, but is present nonetheless in the universal. Thus the universal is said to be a "means of making present" (ālāt al-istihqār). It is also said to be an instrument of waq' (ālāt al-waq'), in that by "summoning" into the presence of the author of language each particular subsumed under it, it makes possible the establishment of an expression for each particular.¹

Al-Ijī distinguishes between the establishment of the proper name and that of the other ma'rifāt by calling the former a particular establishment and the latter a universal establishment. This is an unusual application of the terms "universal" and "particular," but as it--or the application of synonymous terms, i.e. "general" (cāmm) and "special" (khāss)--becomes common in the "science of wad," it is important to understand why such a distinction was made.

Just as the terms "universal" and "particular" may

¹al-Samarqandī, Sharh 'alā al-Risālah al-waq'iyah, fol. 149a.

be applied to expressions with respect to the meanings, i.e. ideas, which they signify, the same terms may be applied to the establishment (wad^c) of expressions with respect to the ideas arising in the mind of the author of language. The establishment of the proper name, e.g. Zayd, is said to be particular because the idea arising in the mind of the author of language is particular, i.e. the idea of Zayd. Since it happens that the concept of Zayd is identical to that for which the expression "Zayd" is established, i.e. the idea itself becomes the meaning, we may speak of a particular establishment of an expression for a particular meaning (al-wad^c al-khāss li mawḍūc lahu khāss, i.e. Kh-Kh). On the other hand, the establishment of expressions like "he" is said to be universal, since the idea arising in the mind of the author of language is universal. However, since the idea is not in this case that for which the expression is established (the idea and the meaning are not identical), but rather the means (ālāh) by which particulars are "summoned" into the presence of the author of language, we must speak of a universal establishment of an expression for a particular meaning (al-wad^c al-^cāmm li-mawḍūc lahu khāss, i.e. A-Kh). A third category follows close behind. The establishment of expressions like "man" is said to be universal, since as in the case of "he"

the idea arising in the mind of the author of language is universal. However, unlike "he", this idea is also the meaning. Consequently, we speak of a universal establishment for a universal meaning. In this manner, the first of the sets of categories which are employed in the "science of waḍʿ" receives its formulation: A-A, A-Kh, Kh-Kh.¹

Al-ʿIṣṭī developed the category of A-Kh also as a means of demonstrating the particularity of particles. Particles, in his view, are particular because the meanings they signify are particular. The particularity of these meanings must be understood against the background of Muslim thought about the nature of particles. This thought has been summed up in two treatises of al-Jurjānī entitled al-Risālah al-ḥarfīyah and al-Risālah al-mirʾāṭīyah. Summations also appear in the commentaries on the treatise of al-ʿIṣṭī.²

The characterization of the particle as "particular" reveals the extent to which the principle of the name-relation was carried in Islam. Every expression in language is understood as a name, a sign, standing for an idea. The meaning of a sentence is simply the sum total of the meaning of its

¹al-Jurjānī, Ḥāshīyah ʿalā al-Risālah al-waḍʿīyah, fol. 3a
al-Qūshjī, Sharḥ al-Risālah al-waḍʿīyah, pp. 37-40

²al-Qūshjī, op. cit., pp. 80-83.

parts, of the significative units contained in it. Each unit thus has its own proper meaning. Thus in the sentence "Zayd fi al-dār (Zayd is in the house), Zayd stands for the idea of the person Zayd, fi stands for the idea of "in-ness" (zar-riyah), and al-dār stands for the idea of a particular house. These ideas, when assembled, produce the total meaning of the sentence.

Though Muslim thinkers assimilated particles to names, they did so with an important qualification which shows they were not naive. A particle, they said, signifies an idea which is "in something else" (fi ghayrihi)¹, i.e. which is not an independent idea, but an idea which relates other ideas and therefore is "in" those ideas. We may call such an idea a relating idea, i.e. an idea whose function is to relate other ideas to each other. This can be elucidated by means of the proposition "from" (min). "From" stands for the idea of "from-ness," or "commencement" (ibtidā'). However, this idea, as the meaning of "from", is not viewed independently, is not regarded for its own sake. It is viewed rather as an "instrument" for relating other ideas to each other, for apprehending other ideas as related. In the sentence "Zayd

¹al-Zamakhsharī, al-Mufaṣṣal, p. 283.

came from Baṣrah", "from", like the other expression, stands for an idea, i.e. "commencement"; but unlike the ideas signified by the other expressions, this idea is "in" the ideas signified by the expressions surrounding "from". "From" does not signify "commencement" merely; it signifies "commencement" as a relating idea, an idea which relates the idea of Baṣrah and to idea of "coming" to each other. "From" by itself signifies nothing; in conjunction with other expressions it signifies something about the ideas signified by those expressions, i.e. that they are related to each other in a certain way. Consequently, its meaning is "in" the meanings of the other expressions. Remove the other expressions and "from" ceases to have meaning.

Al-Jurjānī likens the relating idea to a mirror. One does not look at a mirror in order to behold the mirror itself; rather one looks in order to behold what is reflected in the mirror. Similarly one does not view a relating idea as something to be beheld for its own sake; rather one views it as a mirror for beholding the related ideas, the relata. In the sentence "Zayd came from Baṣrah", the idea of "commencement" functions as a mirror for beholding the ideas of "Baṣrah" and "coming" as related in a particular way. (The same ideas could, by means of "to", or some other preposition, be related

in quite a different way.)

The particularity of the particle, which al-Ījī is concerned to demonstrate, arises from the following considerations: The particularity of expressions, as we have said, derives from the particularity of the ideas they signify. Particles signify relating ideas, and therefore are particular only in virtue of the particularity of such ideas. That relating ideas are particular is due to the fact that the relata are particular. The particularity of a relating idea derives from the particularity of the relata. In the sentence "Zayd came from Baṣrah", the idea of "commencement" relates a particular city, i.e. Baṣrah, and a particular action, i.e. Zayd's coming, to each other. Therefore we may say that "from" signifies a particular "commencement," i.e. that "commencement" which is "in" Baṣrah and Zayd's coming.¹

The author of language, in establishing "from", cannot of course take cognizance of all the instances in which "commencement" is used as a relating idea, i.e. cannot take cognizance of all particular "commencements". Again, this is because he is prior to all speech situations. Therefore he establishes "from" for the universal idea of "commencement",

¹al-Qūshjī, Sharḥ 'alā al-Risālah al-waḍ'īyah, pp. 80-83.

under which all particular "commencements" are subsumed and in which they are present. With reference to particular "commencements," then, the general idea of "commencement" is a means of making present (ālat al-istihdār), whereby the author of language can establish the expression "from" for the particular "commencements" themselves. Accordingly, the establishment of "from", as well as of all particles, is characterized as A-Kh.

* * * * *

The second set of categories of wadʿ is the "isolative" and "subsumptive" wadʿ.¹ The term "isolative" characterizes the establishment of individual expressions; the author of language "isolates" an expression and establishes it for an idea. Thus "Zayd" is established in an isolative manner: the combination of the consonants z y d, together with the vowel a and the sukun (an orthographic sign which in Arabic stands over the final consonant in a closed syllable), is singled out from all other possible combinations of consonants, vowels and sukuns, i.e. from all other expressions, and established for the idea of Zayd. The term "subsumptive" charac-

¹The earliest point at which these categories appear in the literature of wadʿ is in al-Samarqandī, Sharḥ ʿalā al-Risālah al-wadʿiyyah, fol. 10b-11a.

terizes the establishment of formal elements in language, i.e. elements which do not in themselves constitute individual expressions, but are present in individual expressions. For example, the fā'il-form is not in itself an individual expression, but is present in individual expressions, e.g. qā'im, kātib, etc. Similarly, the dual suffix -ān is not an individual expression, but is present in individual expressions such as rajulān, kitābān, risalatān, etc. In a subsumptive "establishment" the author of language does not single out any individual expression and restrict the establishment to it; rather he formulates a general principle (qā'idah, or qānūn) under which a group of expressions is subsumed, and by doing so he establishes summarily, rather than individually, the expressions belonging to the group.¹

The difference between the "isolative" and the "subsumptive" waḍ' may be seen from the formulas of establishment which the treatises in waḍ' attribute to the author of language. In an "isolative" waḍ', the author of language declares: "I establish this expression for this meaning." In a "subsumptive" waḍ', he declares: "I establish every expression containing such and such formal elements for such and such

¹al-Shubrāwī, al-Minhah al-ilāhiyah, pp. 4-6.

meaning." In the opposition between the phrases "this expression" and "every expression which. . ." we have a clear indication of the "isolative-subsumptive" distinction.

The recognition of the formal elements of language as distinct from individual expressions probably dates from the founding of the science of morphology (ʿilm al-sarf) as a separate discipline. According to Ḥājjī Khalīfah, the first to write a special work on morphology was Abū ʿUthmān al-Māzinī, a philologist of the ninth century (d. 863).¹ Consequently we may date the rise of morphology in that century, although morphological matters had been dealt with as part of grammar from the time of Sibawayhi (d. 793). From the ninth century onward, it was customary for philologists to write separate books on grammar and morphology, e.g. the al-Kāfiyah and al-Shāfiyah of Ibn al-Ḥajīb (d. 1248).

The categories of "isolative" and "subsumptive" wadʿ were used by encyclopedists to separate the subject matter of morphology from that of lexicography. Ḥājjī Khalīfah, for example, describes morphology as the science which is concerned with non-complex expressions which have been established in summary fashion (al-mufradāt al-mawḍūʿah bi al-wadʿ

¹Ḥājjī Khalīfah, Kashf al-zunūn, I, p. 288.

al-naw'ī).¹ Lexicography, on the other hand, has to do with non-complex expressions which have been established in "isolative" fashion.²

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The third set of categories, i.e. "direct" and "indirect" wad'c, provides a basis for distinguishing between the establishment of non-metaphors (haqīqah) and that of metaphors (majāz). In a "direct" wad'c, an expression is established for an idea in such a way that it signifies that idea of and through itself; in an "indirect" wad'c, an expression is established for an idea in such a way that it signifies that idea only by means of an additional factor other than the expression itself, i.e. a context (garīnah) which indicates a connection (‘alāqah) between the proper meaning and the metaphorical meaning.³

Since the category of "indirect" wad'c is applicable only to one of the "elements" dealt with in the "science of

¹Hājji Khalīfah, Kashf al-zunūn, I, p. 288; II, p. 78; cf. Tashkōprūzade, Miftāh al-sa‘ādah, I, p. 112.

²Hājji Khalīfah, op. cit., II, p. 358; cf. Tashkōprūzade, op. cit., I, p. 89.

³al-Shubrāwī, al-Minhah al-ilāhiyah, pp. 3-4; al-Zawhīrī, al-Mulakhkhas, p. 3.

wad^c, i.e. the metaphor, whereas the category of "direct" wad^c embraces all the other elements, and since there is no disagreement in the later literature of wad^c over the application of these categories, little attention is given to them in the wad^c treatises. Consequently, in the pages to follow, which are concerned with the application of the categories of wad^c to the "elements" of language, the third set of categories will not be taken into account.

II

The application of the categories of wad^c to the "elements" of language is the chief concern of the "science of wad^c." Before we see how this application is carried out, we must have a clear conception of what the "elements" of language, with which the wad^c treatises deal, are. These may be grouped under the following headings.

(1) Words: proper names, generic names, personal pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, relative pronouns, particles, stationary nouns,¹ source-nouns, morphological terms (fā^cil

¹i.e. ism jāmid, as opposed to ism al-maḡdar and al-ism al-muštaqq (see Wright, A Grammar of the Arabic Language, I, p. 106). The term generally used in the wad^c treatises is ism al-jins, but since this is restricted to the ism jāmid, rather than being made to embrace both ism jāmid and ism al-maḡdar, as is usually done in grammar, we will employ an English translation of ism jāmid.

maf'ûl, etc.)

(2) Formal elements occurring in words: (a) suffixes: the plural suffix, the dual suffix, the relative suffix (-i); (b) forms: the form of the derived noun (al-ism al-mushtaq), the form of the verb, the form of the diminutive.

(3) Formal elements occurring in groups of words: (a) particle-plus-noun phrases: the definite article-plus-noun phrase (al-muḥallā bi-al), the vocative phrase (e.g. "O Muḥammad"); (b) constructions (murakkabāt), i.e. phrases consisting of nouns, or noun-plus-verb: the declarative sentence (khabarī), the institutive (inshā'ī) sentence, the construct phrase, the attributive (tawṣīfī) phrase.

(4) Material elements occurring in words: the "matter" (māddah), i.e. radicals, of the derived noun, the "matter" of the verb.

Again it should be stressed that each of these "elements" is treated on the order of a name; each is established to be the name of some idea. It also should be stressed that the above enumeration of "elements" is regarded by the authors as exhaustive;¹ there is no "element" in language which is not

¹ism ilah, ism zamān, ism makān, al-sifah al-mushabbahah are included under ism al-mushtaq; see al-Qushjī, Sharḥ 'alā al-Risālah al-waḍ'iyah, p. 66.

included somewhere in the enumeration. Consequently the application of the categories of wad' to these "elements" constitutes an exhaustive account of the establishment of language.

A word should be said concerning the role of the form-matter distinction in the above enumeration. The "hylomorphic dualism"¹ constitutes one of the leading principles of Arabic philology. The twenty-eight consonants of the alphabet represent an inanimate corpse to which the vowels, sukuns, and extraneous consonants give life, a material substratum upon which they endow form. Forms² are particularized when united with matter; the result of this union is particular words, which are the subject matter of lexicography. Detached from matter, forms are general embracing a plurality of words and having no "resting place" (mahall) in any particular word. As such, they are the subject matter of morphology and are designated by means of morphological terms (fā'il, etc., which are counted among the "elements" of language). Formless matter, on the other hand, i.e. radicals qaw radicals, are the subject matter of the "major etymology" (ishtiqaq kabir).

¹Massignon, "La Structure Primitive de l'Analyse Grammaticale en Arabe," Arabica, I, fasc. 1, p. 12.

²i.e. including both word-forms and other formal elements.

It should be noted that in the above enumeration not all words are dichotomized into "form" and "matter", but only derived words, i.e. verbs and derived nouns. The reason for this is to be found in etymological considerations. According to the Baṣrite theory of derivation,¹ which became standard, words were derived from a source-noun (maṣdar) by virtue of an additional meaning which was superimposed upon the basal meaning of the source-name itself. The basal meaning was carried over by the radicals, i.e. the "matter", of the derived word; the additional meaning was expressed by the form of the word. For example, the derived noun ḍārib and the verb ḍaraba are both derived from the source-noun ḍarb. In the case of both ḍārib and ḍaraba, the basal meaning of the source-noun is perpetuated by means of the radicals; the meaning of the radicals is identical to the meaning of the source-noun. An additional meaning is introduced by means of the forms of the derived words. ḍārib, by means of its form, signifies a substance (dhāt) and a relation (nisbah); ḍaraba, by means of its form, signifies time (zamān) and a relation (nisbah). Thus both the "form" and "matter" of derived words constitute units of signification, which is the "science of wadʿ" become

¹al-Anbārī, Kitāb al-inṣāf, pp. 103-105.

"elements" of language. This is not so in the case of source-nouns, or any other of the "elements" under the heading "words", since in the case of such words the form qua form contributes nothing to the meaning of the word. The function of the source-noun vis-a-vis derived words is simply to name a meaning which can serve as a basis for derivation.

In the Muslim etymological system there are two basic types of meanings: substances (dhawāt) and actions (ahdāth). Only an action can serve as the basis for a derivation; an action implies a substance, i.e. a doer, and a relation between doer and action, as well as a time in which the action is performed; therefore it is conceivable that from a word which names an action other words may be derived which also name the other factors implicit in an action. A substance cannot serve as the basis for a derivation because a substance does not imply an action, or any of the other factors. A word which simply names a substance is considered to be etymologically stationary (jāmid), i.e. non-productive.

From the point of view of the "science of wadʿ", source-nouns and stationary nouns constitute in themselves "elements" of language, whereas derived words, rather than themselves constituting "elements", embrace constituents, i.e. form and matter, which are the real "elements" of language.

The application of the categories of waḍʿ to the "elements" of language follows a standard procedure in the waḍʿ treatises. First, expressions are classified in terms of the categories of "isolative" and "subsumptive" waḍʿ; then expressions falling under each of these categories are further classified in terms of the categories of Kh-Kh, A-Kh, A-A. The result is the following general outline.

"Isolative" waḍʿ

Kh-Kh

A-Kh

A-A

"Subsumptive" waḍʿ

Kh-Kh

A-Kh

A-A

Accordingly, in the following pages we will deal first with the application of the categories of "isolative" and "subsumptive" waḍʿ to the "elements" of language, and subsequently with the application of the categories of Kh-Kh, A-Kh, and A-A. The sources on which we will concentrate will be: Muṣṭafā ibn Muḥammad al-Ṣafawī (18th century), Risālah fi al-waḍʿ Muḥammad Ḥajarzāde (19th century), Risālah fi al-waḍʿ Ibrāhīm ibn Khalīl al-Akīnī (19th century), al-Risālah al-Rahmīyah

'Abd al-Malik al-Patnī (19th century), 'Aqd al-īa'ālī

Yūsuf ibn Ahmad al-Dijwī (20th century), Khulāṣat al-waḍ'

'Abd al-Rahmān Khalaf (20th century), Khulāṣat 'ilm al-waḍ'

'Abd al-Khālīq al-Shubrāwī (20th century), al-Minhah al-
ilāhiyah fī al-qawā'id al-waḍ'iyah

Muhammad al-Ḥusaynī al-Zawāhirī (20th century), al-Mulakh-
khaṣ fī 'ilm al-waḍ'

With the exception of the treatise of al-Ṣafawī, all of these works were published. Since they are for the most part recent, we may take them to represent the "science of waḍ'" at the final stage of its development.

* * * * *

With respect to the application of the categories of "isolative" and "subsumptive" waḍ' to the "elements" of language, our authors are in almost complete agreement. All agree on the following: (1) that among the "words" proper names, generic names, personal pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, particles and stationary nouns are established by "isolative" waḍ'; (2) that all "formal elements", both those occurring in words and those occurring in groups of words, are established by a "subsumptive" waḍ'. The "elements" over which disagreement occurs are: source-nouns, morphological terms, and the "material elements." In each case, however, the disagreement is slight, involving only one or two dissenters

from the general consensus.

As regards the source-noun, 'Abd al-Rahmān Khalaf¹ differs with the other seven authors in maintaining that it is established by a "subsumptive" waḍʿ. He takes the form of the source-noun seriously, irrespective of the fact that it has no separate meaning. Thus the author of language declares: "I establish every source-noun (i.e. every expression having the form of a source-noun) for such and such meaning." The other authors, to the contrary, attribute an "isolative" waḍʿ to source nouns: "I establish ḍarb for 'striking' and qiyām for 'standing', etc."

The disagreement over morphological terms is a matter not so much of a conflict of views, as a refusal on the part of some to express any view at all. Those who do express a view (al-Ṭatnī, Ḥajarzāde, al-Ṣafawī, al-Aḳīnī) agree that morphological terms are established by a "subsumptive" waḍʿ. The rationale for this view is most fully given by a nineteenth century Shaykh of al-Azhar, Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Imbābī, in a treatise entitled Risālah fi al-waḍʿ. The declaration is as follows: "I establish every word containing the radicals f ʿ l as the name of the form inhering in it." Thus in a

¹Abd al-Rahmān Khalaf, al-Mulakhkhaṣ, p. 13.

single instance the author of language establishes a set of names for all the forms dealt with in morphology. Those authors who remain silent on the subject of morphological terms do not take these terms into consideration at all as "elements" of language.

Again in the case of the "material elements," there is only the dissent of the few from the opinion of the majority. The common view is that the material substratum of derived words, i.e. the radicals, are established by an "isolative" wadʿ: the author of language isolates a particular combination of radicals, e.g. q r b, and establishes it for a meaning. This view presupposes an underlying unity of a "family" of derived words with respect to the radicals they share; all diversity is based on form. A "family" is produced when a single combination of radicals is united with a plurality of forms. pārib, maḍrūb, ḍaraba, etc., are members of a "family": the radicals q r b represent one and the same element in all of the several words; their occurrence in each word constitutes only "token" instances of a single "element." On the other hand, ḡārib, kātib, qā'im are not members of a family; the lexicons are not arranged according to forms, but according to radicals. Consequently, it would be wrong to think of the forms of these words as "token" instances of

a single "element," to which radicals are added, producing diversity. It is upon such considerations as these that the common view is based, according to which an "isolative" waḍ' is assigned to radicals of derived words.

Those, on the other hand, who assign a "subsumptive" waḍ' to the radicals (al-ṣafawī, al-Dijwī) treat the "matter" of the derived words on the analogy of the form; both "matter" and "form" are "elements" which appear in individual expressions, therefore both are established subsumptively. Just as the fā'il-form appears in a plurality of words, e.g. ḡārib, kātib, qā'im, etc., so the combination of radicals ḡ r b appears in a plurality of words, e.g. ḡārib, maḡrūb, ḡaraba, etc. Accordingly, consonants are established by the declaration: "I establish every derived word containing the radicals ḡ r b for such and such meaning."

The dissenting views aside, the general picture that emerges respecting the application of the categories of "isolative" and "subsumptive" waḍ' to the "elements" of language is as follows. Those "elements" which are established by an "isolative" waḍ' are: proper names, generic names, personal pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, relative pronouns, particles, stationary nouns, source-nouns, the "matter" of derived nouns, the "matter" of verbs. Those "elements" which are established

by a "subsumptive" waḍʿ are: all the "formal elements" enumerated earlier (see above, p. 119), namely, the definite article-plus-noun phrase, the vocative phrase, the declarative sentence, the institutive sentence, the construct phrase, the attributive phrase, the plural suffix, the dual suffix, the relative suffix, the "form" of the derived noun, the "form" of the verb, the diminutive.

* * * * *

The application of the categories Kh-Kh, A-Kh, and A-A to the "elements" of language is more fraught with difficulty, and the authors are more divided among themselves as to how it should be done. The disagreement touches primarily those elements which are established by a "subsumptive" waḍʿ. Concerning the "elements" established by an "isolative" waḍʿ, there is complete accord, the reason being that the application of the categories Kh-Kh, A-Kh, and A-A to these "elements" was settled by al-Ijī and the earliest commentators on his treatise. Their precedent is not challenged by the later authors. Thus the following grouping of "elements" is universally accepted: Kh-Kh--proper names, generic names; A-Kh--personal pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, relative pronouns, particles; A-A--stationary nouns, source-nouns, the "matter" of derived nouns, the "matter" of verbs.

The disagreement over the application of the categories of Kh-Kh, A-Kh, A-A to the "elements" established by "subsumptive" wad' centers on the following three groups of elements: (1) the vocative phrase, the diminutive, the plural suffix, the dual suffix, the relative suffix; (2) the "constructions," i.e. the declarative sentence, the institutive sentence, the construct phrase, the attributive phrase; (3) the "form" of the derived noun and the "form" of the verb. The only "elements" upon which there is agreement are morphological terms, which are characterized as Kh-Kh, and the definite article-plus-noun phrase, which is characterized as A-Kh.

(1) Concerning the first group of controversial "elements" opinions are evenly divided. Four of our authors (al-Shubrāwī, 'Abd al-Rahmān Khalaf, al-Zawāhirī, al-Dijwī) maintain that these words are established for particulars by means of universal ideas, in the manner in which pronouns and particles were said to be established by al-Ījī. The other four (al-Patnī, Ḥajarzāde, al-Ṣafawī, al-Akīnī) maintain that they are established for universals.

The central issue, with respect both to this group of "elements" and the other groups, is whether the "formal elements" in language are to be regarded as universals or particulars: they are universal if they are established directly

for universal ideas; they are particular if they are established for particular ideas through the instrumentality of universal ideas. (That they are established directly for particulars is precluded by all.) Otherwise stated, the issue is whether the "formal elements" are established for meanings which they have in themselves, or for meanings which they have when appearing in words. If the latter is the case, then the meanings which they seem to have in themselves are instruments of waḍʿ. To take a case in point: is the form yā fulān (O so-and-so) established for the universal idea "someone's presence is desired" or for the particular ideas which it conveys when found in individual expressions, e.g. yā Muḥammad (O Muḥammad), yā Zayd (O Zayd), etc. If the latter is the case, then the universal idea "someone's presence is desired" is an instrument of waḍʿ, i.e. a gathering or summoning medium which gathers the particular ideas for which the author of language wishes to establish the word: "Muḥammad's presence is desired," "Zayd's presence is desired," etc. The fact that the authors of the most recent treatises on waḍʿ are divided on the question is evidence that the issue was never resolved.

(2) In the case of "constructions", the issue is the same, though our authors are differently divided. Al Patnī,

'Abd al-Raḥmān Khalaf, al-Ẓawāhirī, al-Dijwī, al-Ṣafawī classify "constructions" as A-A; al-Shubrāwī, Ḥajarzāde, al-Akinī classify them as A-Kh. Again the question is whether the "form" of the declarative sentence, for example, i.e. the juxtaposition of a subject term (musnad ilayhi) and a predicate term (musnad), is established for the general idea of "a complete relation" (al-nisbah al-tāmmah), or for particular ideas which are "gathered" by this general idea: "a complete relation between Zayd and 'standing'" (in Zayd qā'im), "a complete relation between Zayd and 'striking'" (in Zayd qārib), etc. Once more, the issue is not resolved.

(3) The disagreement is somewhat less keen with respect to the "form" of the derived noun and the verb. Here we can make out a majority opinion: the "form" of the derived noun falls under the category A-A. The "form" of the verb is given a double classification, in terms of its two meaning-components, i.e. relation (nisbah) and time (zamān).¹ With respect to its signification of relation, it is classified as A-Kh. With respect to its signification of time, opinion is again divided: some classify it as A-Kh, some as A-A.

¹This is the only instance in which two categories of *wad'* are applied to one and the same "element." It suggests that the form of the verb comprises two "sub-elements" corresponding to the two meaning-components, i.e. relation and time.

The rationale for the above classification of the "form" of the derived noun and the "form" of the verb is to be found in a theory of syntax which is worked out in the commentaries on al-Ijī's treatise.¹ The cardinal point in this theory is that language seeks to express particular relations. (This is in keeping with the basic Islamic principle that the knowledge of particulars is the highest kind of knowledge.) The primary means by which this is done is the sentence. The sentence characteristically expresses a particular relation between a particular substance and a particular action. The key term in the relation, upon which the particularity of the action and the relation itself depends, is the substance. If I say "Zayd went to Baghdad", I am asserting a relation between a particular substance, i.e. Zayd, and a particular action, i.e. his going to Baghdad. The idea of "going to Baghdad" is in itself universal, but when predicated of Zayd it becomes a particular "going to Baghdad", i.e. Zayd's going to Baghdad. The idea of Zayd is, on the other hand, in itself particular.

In the above statement, "the sentence characteristically

¹al-Isfarā'īnī, Sharh 'alā al-Risālah al-waḍ'īyah, fol. 30a-36b, 47a; al-Qūshjī, Sharh 'alā al-Risālah al-waḍ'īyah, pp. 85-91.

expresses a particular relation between a particular substance and a particular action," the qualification "characteristically" is necessary because there are sentences which do not express a relation between a substance and an action, but rather a relation between substance and substance, e.g. "Zayd is a man." However, this sort of relation does not hold much interest for the writers on waq', though it does hold interest for the logicians. The syntactical theory of the "science of waq'" is based exclusively on the substance-action relation and has very little to do with purely logical relations, which are the preoccupation of the logicians. The reason for this is to be found in the general orientation of Muslim thought to narrative (hadith). The essence of a statement is that something happens: what happens must be reported (khabar). Muslim legal, historiographical, and religious literature takes the form of hadith (a cognate of hadath, "happening"). It is thus fitting that the substance-action relation should occupy such a prominent place in syntactical theory. The true subject is a substance, the true predicate an action.

The central question to which the syntactical theory of the "science of waq'" attempts to supply an answer is: how do sentences express particular substance-action relations? In brief, what the theory affirms is that a sentence expresses

a particular substance-action relation by incorporating words (either derived nouns, or verbs) which themselves express that relation. The underlying principle is that the signification of the whole (the sentence) is derived from the signification of one of the parts (the derived noun, or verb). The sentence-form itself conveys only the very general idea of relation, without stipulating anything about either of the terms (relata) of the relation. The derived noun and the verb are more specific.

A sentence which expresses a particular substance-action relation by means of a derived noun is a nominal sentence; a sentence which does so by means of a verb is a verbal sentence. Each of these is analyzed differently, and therefore the two sentence-types will be discussed in turn.

4a) The nominal sentence Zayd qā'im (Zayd is standing) conveys a particular relation between a particular substance, i.e. Zayd, and a particular action, i.e. Zayd's standing. How does it do this? It would be wrong to say that the sentence Zayd qā'im conveys what it does because it consists of two parts, one part signifying a particular substance and the other a particular action. Qā'im signifies more than an action. If you conjoin Zayd with a word signifying nothing more than "standing", i.e. qiyām, you do not produce a sentence, but

only a list. A sentence requires that the relation between substance and action itself be expressed by one of its parts. In the sentence Zayd qā'im, the relation between Zayd and "standing" is expressed by the form of qā'im.

A derived noun signifies altogether three meaning-components:¹ a substance, an action, and a relation. The action is signified by the material substratum, i.e. the radicals, and the substance and relation are signified by the "form". Thus all the factors present in the meaning of a sentence are present also in the meaning of the derived noun. For this reason, the derived noun may be said to prefigure the sentence. The prefiguration, however, is not the real thing. The meaning of qā'im lacks the particularity that characterizes the meaning of Zayd qā'im. The substance which it signifies is universal, and, as stated before, the substance is the key term upon which the universality or particularity of the action and relation depend. Consequently, qā'im must be classed as a universal. However, though universal, it plays

¹The term "meaning-components" is used in order not to give the impression that substance, action and relation as significata of the derived noun are separate meanings. Isam al-Din al-Isfara'ini emphasizes the fundamental unity of the derived noun; the significata are "mixed together" so as to form a single meaning, see al-Isfara'ini, Sharḥ 'alā al-Risālah al-wad'iyah, fol. 36a.

an important syntactical role in the sentence Zayd qā'im; it signifies a universal relation which is particularized when placed in juxtaposition to a noun which signifies a particular substance. Thus Zayd and qā'im complement each other in a way that Zayd and qiyām cannot. In the combination Zayd qiyām there is nothing to tell us that "standing" is related to Zayd; in Zayd qā'im there is: qā'im (which may be translated, in accordance with its essentially substantival character, "a standing one") signifies that the action "standing" is related to some substance, Zayd identifies, i.e. particularizes, the substance, and in so doing particularizes the action and relation. From Zayd qā'im we learn that Zayd is the "standing one." In this manner, the nominal sentence expresses a particular substance-action relation.

(b) With the verbal sentence, the matter is quite otherwise. The sentence qāma Zayd (Zayd stood), no less than the sentence Zayd qā'im (Zayd is the standing one), expresses a particular relation between Zayd and "standing"; and it does so by means of one of its parts, i.e. the verb. But the role of the verb in expressing a particular relation is quite different from the role of the derived noun. We have said that the derived noun prefigures the sentence; it signifies a universal meaning (i.e. universal relation between a universal

substance and action) which is particularized when conjoined with a name signifying a particular substance. The verb, on the other hand, signifies a particular meaning. The components of this meaning are: a particular action, a particular relation, and a time (past, present, or future). Since not all the meaning-components of the sentence are present in the meaning of the verb--the missing component being substance--the verb cannot be said to prefigure the sentence. Moreover, unlike the derived noun, the action and relation which are signified are a particular action and relation; therefore, the verb signifies nothing universal to be particularized by an attached noun. Further, since the verb signifies a relation without signifying both relata, its total meaning is not complete, not independently comprehensible (ghayr mustaqill bi al-maf-hūmiyah). A relation simply cannot be grasped if one or both of the relata are missing. Therefore, a verb must be accompanied by a noun indicating the substance. Since the verb always appears in discourse as an adjunct to a noun which supplies a particular substance, the relation expressed by the "form" of the verb is always a particular relation.

To state the matter in terms of subject and predicate: in the case of a nominal sentence, the subject particularizes the meaning of the predicate (a derived noun). In the case

of a verbal sentence, the subject completes the meaning of the predicate (a verb). In both cases, the result is a particular meaning for the sentence as a whole (i.e. a particular relation between a particular substance and a particular action.)

It is fitting, then, that the "form" of the derived noun be classified as A-A, and the "form" of the verb--with respect to the relation it signifies--as A-Kh. When the author of language establishes the "form" of the derived noun, he apprehends a universal idea and makes it the meaning of the "form". When he establishes the "form" of the verb, he apprehends a universal idea (relation), but uses this idea as an instrument by which to establish the form for countless particular relations subsumed under it.¹

The "form" of the verb, however, has a meaning-component which is other than a relation or relatum: time (zamān). With respect to this meaning-component, some classify the "form" of the verb as A-Kh, others as A-A. The issue was whether time is of such a nature that it can be particularized. Is the time expressed in qama Zayd, for example, a universal idea, i.e. past time (al-mādī) with which one characterizes the action of "standing", or is it a particular time, i.e.

¹Muhammad Hajarzade, Risālah fi al-waḍʿ, pp. 8-9.

the exact point in time in which Zayd stood?¹ This issue is not resolved.

¹Muhammad Hajarzade, Risālah fi al-wadʿ, p. 11; al-Shubrāwī, al-Minhah al-ilāhiyah, p. 19.

Conclusions

In this dissertation we have been concerned with the role of language in orthodox Muslim thought. Our general contention has been that language occupies the place of a given upon which Islam, as a way of life centered upon sacred law, in the final analysis depends. God has spoken once and for all to mankind through the Prophet, and His words have been recorded in a Book; it is for man to take heed and obey. In the absence of any "natural revelation", the Book is the sole expression of the divine will. Therefore it is imperative that the Book be understood. In this, man has no other recourse than to the language in which the Book is written. If he masters the language, he may understand what God has said. In a religious system predicated exclusively upon the spoken word, in the most literal sense, language is the only "point of contact" between God and man. Since the word is spoken once and once only, language must be a constant and unchanging given. The meanings which expressions have in the Book are the meanings with which they are inextricably connected in language.

The problem to which the discussions of the origin

of language, in the ninth and tenth centuries, were directed was how to find a basis for the givenness of language. Two proposed solutions were ultimately rejected by the orthodox: that of the "naturalists" and that of the early traditionalists.

The "naturalist" view of language as posited in nature, i.e. in the natural affinity between vocal sounds and meanings, was short-lived in Islam, mainly because it presupposed a concept of nature, predicated on a notion of causality which was essentially alien to the Muslim occasionalist view of the world. The idea that expressions signify meanings by themselves (bi dhātiḥā), i.e. are the cause of their own signification, granted to language an efficacy which properly belonged to God. Not even among the Mu tazilites, who were the intellectual vanguard of ninth century Islam, did the naturalist view gain a permanent footing.

The traditionist view of language, on the other hand, was widespread in early Islam and lingered on, even after the orthodox had implicitly rejected it, among ultra-conservatives. According to this view, language was a transcendental reality which was bestowed upon Adam at creation by instruction or inspiration. This view of language was an implicate of the doctrine of the uncreatedness of divine speech, which was equated with the Koran. Language was bound up with the arti-

culateness of God himself.

What was objectionable, from the point of view of later orthodoxy, about the traditionist view of language as a transcendental given was the corollary emphasis upon the discontinuity between the language of the Koran and that spoken by the Arabs in the Prophet's time. All spoken language was considered to be a corruption of the transcendental archetype. Language in its pure archetypal form was granted only to prophets. This accorded perfectly with the traditionist principle that only the Prophet could interpret the Koran, since only he had command of the pure language. Consequently the givens of language were beyond the reach of the ordinary man. Clarification of expressions in the Koran was possible only by means of traditions issuing from the Prophet or a Companion who could speak on behalf of the Prophet. The result was a much too great dependence on tradition. So long as traditions were in the making, the principle that interpretation issues from the Prophet appeared valid. But once the proliferation of traditions had led to reactionary criticism and the final consolidation of tradition in the canonical books, this principle showed its limitations. There were important matters of interpretation which were simply not covered by tradition.

Having rejected the "naturalist" and early traditionist

attempts to provide a basis for the givenness of language, the later orthodox found the required basis in the notion of language as "established". Language thus came to be understood under the category of sunnah. As such, it was neither a transcendental reality nor a phenomenon of nature. But it was nonetheless a given; for it is characteristic of the Sunnite mentality that what is established is regarded as most truly given; what is established is permanent and unchanging. This emphasis on the givenness of language-as-established had definite practical advantages. It closed the breach which traditionists had created between the "language of the Arabs" and the language of the Koran. Established meant established among the Arabs (though not necessarily by the Arabs). What the orthodox were affirming in speaking of the establishment of language (waq' al-lughah) was the validity of the "language of the Arabs" as a point of reference in the interpretation of sacred texts, as a given vis-a-vis the whole system of sacred law.

The idea of language-as-established was a heritage from the Mu'tazilites. The Mu'tazilites in turn were heirs of al-Shāfi'ī. Al-Shāfi'ī had emphasized the fundamental importance for legal theory of knowing Arabic well. In this respect he shows himself free of the negative attitude of

the strict traditionists toward philological studies. The Risālah suggests strongly that philological studies have an immense bearing on the interpretation of the sacred texts.

The "language of the Arabs" is very much a given for al-Shāfi'ī. The Mu'tazilites, following in al-Shāfi'ī's footsteps, were the first to work out the idea of the givenness of language in terms of the category "established." It was they who introduced wad' al-lughah into the vocabulary of Islam. For them established meant not only established among the Arabs, but established by the Arabs as well. In the early tenth century Abū Hāshim advanced a "conventionalist" view of language, according to which all language was established by collaboration. This view was held by those followers of Abū Hāshim who exercised such an immense influence on the development of legal theory: 'Abd al-Jabbār and Abū al-Ḥusayn. It was not uncontested, however. Abū Hāshim himself was countered by al-Ash'arī, who maintained that language was of divine origin. To what extent al-Ash'arī's "theological" view resembled the traditionist view cannot be determined. It seems quite clear, however, that later Ash'arites advanced a "theological" view quite unlike that of the traditionists. According to this view, God established language, i.e. brought it into being. This could not be said of a transcendental archetype.

The fact that the issue was framed as it was (i.e. by whom is language established?) shows that the Mu'tazilites had won half the battle. Both sides admitted that language was established, that language belonged to the realm of sunnah. This was a victory of the philological enterprise over the resistance of strict traditionism, since it represented a return to the "language of the Arabs" as the given.

In time the question of who established language lost its importance. Al-Bāqillānī, in effect, brought to an end the controversy over the origin of language by declaring that both the "conventionalist" and "theological" views were but logical possibilities, neither of which had conclusive evidence to support it. What mattered henceforth was that language was in fact established, irrespective of the identity of the agent or agents of this establishment. Whether a product of convention or divine fiat, language was in any case, like sunnah, established "among" the Arabs, indeed among Muslims in general.

The idea of language-as-established took on a special importance for the scholastic legal theorists. Legal theorists had come to consider certain features of language, i.e. metaphor, homonymity, synonymity, generality, idiom, as constituting the basic facts with which the exegete must deal and upon

which he must base his principles of interpretation. The scholastics were concerned to justify their hermeneutical efforts by showing that these features were established; accordingly they formulated "linguistic premises" which embodied all the facts of language relevant to the task of interpreting texts. What-is-established in language became an ultimate given upon which the science of the principles of jurisprudence, conceived on the model of an Aristotelian science, rests.

Once the givenness of language came to be understood in terms of the establishment of language (wad^c al-lughah), there remained the task of working out the idea of the establishment of language in full. This was done in the "science of wad^c". From its inception, the idea of the establishment of language meant the establishment of expressions for ideas. It was assumed that language in its entirety was so established. The treatises in wad^c carry this assumption to its logical conclusion. Language is segmented into constituent "elements", and each "element" shown to be established for an idea. The "elements" include every conceivable unit of signification. The earliest advocates of the view of language-as-established in all probability thought in terms of a simple establishment of words for ideas; words are most easily treated as the names

of things. The "science of waq'" goes beyond words; it searches out all significative elements in language, even formal elements, such as suffixes, radicals, construction-forms, etc., and treats each as a name. Even though a formal element is viewed as inhering in a plurality of individual words, it is nonetheless regarded as a name, since it is assigned to a meaning. Particles, too, many of which, e.g. conjunctions, would be regarded by modern linguists as purely functional, are treated as names. Thus the principle of the name-relation, according to which the meaning of an expression is the idea for which it stands, is applied to everything in language down to the last jot and tittle.

The assimilation of all the "elements" of language to names was an inevitable consequence of certain presuppositions which were implicit from the beginning in the idea of language-as-established. One of these presuppositions was that language was the result of conscious deliberation. The identity of the author of language may have been relegated to the unknown, but that language has an author was never doubted. The formulas of establishment which appear throughout the literature of waq', e.g. "I establish this word for this meaning," bear witness to a notion of the establishment of language as a fully deliberate, fully rational act.

Expressions are methodically correlated with pre-existent ideas. Consequently, everything in language, every conceivable element, must be accounted for in terms of this initial act of deliberation. A word like "and" is established by being established for an idea; in no other way is its establishment conceivable.

Another presupposition is that information about language is a matter of information about the meanings for which expressions have been established. Since language is conceived to be established at a fixed point in the past, there is a pre-occupation with information about language. This information must be properly transmitted through reliable channels. For this reason legal theorists and philologists alike are compelled to give attention to the question of the transmission of linguistic information. To know any element in language is to be informed by reliable transmitters that the element has been established for a certain meaning. In no other way is the knowledge of language conceivable. Thus to know "and" is to know, not that it has a certain function within language, but that it has been established for a particular meaning, i.e. "combination" (jam^c).

The "science of wad^c" brings the development of the idea of the givenness of language to a conclusion. So exhaus-

tive is the account of how the "elements" of language are established for meanings that Muslim orthodox thought seems to have reached a natural limit beyond which it cannot conceivably go. The "science of waq'" is the most thorough-going statement of the constancy of language imaginable. It is a truly Islamic phenomenon, for only in Islam does constancy in language play such an important role.

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Dissertation Abstract

This dissertation is concerned with the idea of the givenness of language as a fundamental Islamic idea. The phrase which gives expression to this idea is wad' al-lughah (establishment of language). The dissertation comprises three sections. The first is devoted to the controversy among Muslims over the origin of language. This controversy is viewed as a background for the understanding of the early development of the idea of the givenness of language and the ultimate articulation of that idea by means of the phrase wad' al-lughah. The second section deals with the further development of the idea within the science of the principles of jurisprudence ('ilm usul al-fiqh). The crucial role of the term wad within the linguistic premises (al-mabadi' al-lughawiyyah) of that science is examined. The final section is concerned with the final crystallization of the idea of the givenness of language in the "science of wad'" ('ilm al-wad'), a science which grew out of the science of the principles of jurisprudence.